HORACE WALPOLE

AS A POET

The mob of Gentlemen who wrote with ease.

Pope. *Hor. Epis.* II. i. 108.

Thèse présentée
à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris

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PAUL YVON
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INTRODUCTORY

An English critic (1), though admitting that Horace Walpole has some good points, has stated that, « in matters of taste and criticism, with some exception as to the arts of design, there is no more extreme representative of the hopeless Philistinism, which has been unjustly charged on the century at large, than Horace Walpole. Of real poetry, real romance, real mystery and real passion of any kind, he had no share, no inkling even. It is pretty certain, that, if Gray had not been his personal friend, and especially, if he had been an anti-Walpolian, Horace would not have admired his poetry; as it was, one shrewdly suspects that he thought Mason's quite as good. » Though this suggestive appreciation tallies well enough, if not quite, with the view generally taken of Horace Walpole, it seems a very sweeping assertion all the same, and we beg leave not to agree with it completely.

If judged only by what he achieved, Horace Walpole, we said elsewhere, might have distinguished himself in three ways in English poetry. As a worldly and fashionable poet, he might have rivalled Pope with some light and pretty poem of a delicate if superficial cast like the *Rape of the Lock*; he might have written a good burlesque poem like the *Lutrin*, he might have been a dramatist of

1. G. Saintsbury: *The Peace of the Augustans*. London 1916, p. 228.

no mean order ; in fact he did write a tragedy which showed he had sufficient talent to make a name for himself, in this higher department of English Literature (1).

The following essay is therefore not much more than a kind of by-chapter to the present writer's study on Horace Walpole. This very voluminous author not only scattered through his works much poetical criticism, significant of the keen interest he took in poetry, but he also wrote a respectable amount of varied verse himself. To sum up this criticism and investigate its statements, and then, to examine Walpole's poetical works in the light of this criticism and in their connection with the literature of the times will be part of the scope of this study. It is also intended to trace the various aspects of Walpole's poetical talent through its development, and to make as fair an estimate as possible of its æsthetic value, and of the artistic and literary abilities it represents.

The answer to the question : « what are we to think of his poetry ? » is an interesting one ; to dismiss the whole case with the well known adage, « poeta nascitur, non fit », would not be giving an adequate answer. Indeed, the study of Walpole's poetical achievements, is the study not of the total, but of the comparative failure in a certain walk of literature of an author who was not unfitted to be a poet, at least according to the ideals of his own day : but the man had not the courage or rather the will to take the pains or to undergo the necessary technical training and practice to become one. Moreover, as he was both an interesting personage of his own time and a literary man of unquestionable merit, a study of his attempts at poetry, even when they did not prove quite successful may give us

1. Cf. *The Quarterly Review*, vol. XIX. April and December. London 1818, p. 122.

some insight into the psychology of the gentleman and help us to understand him better.

Only few people, we are afraid, will care for the verses which seem to us worth quoting and studying. But this will not hinder us from looking at the big quartos on our shelves with a fresh and unprejudiced eye, and from directing our attention to the singer of trifles, which have, naturally enough, been neglected in favour of his letters. Most of the short pieces are pretty little bubbles, having the brilliancy of all the colours of the rainbow, but just like bubbles, they suddenly vanish into laughter or mockery, both a little meaningless, a little empty. They will not please every one.

Sir Leslie Stephen's attempt towards fairness when speaking of Horace Walpole is unquestionable. He is not however, much in favour of Walpole's verse (1). Setting his letters apart, in which, « Walpole, » he says, « shows the merit of never being dull, better than anywhere else », « the « quality, he continues, is less conspicuous in the rest of « his works, and the light verses and essays in which we « might expect him to succeed are disappointingly weak ». G. Hardinge, Walpole's friend, or, who called himself so, was of the same opinion, so far as the verse (2) was concerned, though he spared the « Essays ». However, if we put the question : « could any of these pieces find their way into anthologies ? » we find that Austin Dobson has quoted some of them in a very liberal manner (3). But Dobson will perhaps be looked upon as being too easily pleased with a dainty dawdler's lazy rhymes, when they belong to the times when wigs, patches, brocades and lawns were in honour. G. Saintsbury, himself pointing out

1. Cf. *Hours in a Library*, I, p. 31.—2. *Nichols' Illustrations*, vol. VII.—

« what might be the constituents of a never yet made collection of small pieces of the XVIII th century » includes with « some delightful petulances » of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, « the works of Chesterfield and Pulteney, and the clever pieces of Hanbury Williams, *one or two of Walpole's*, though Horace in verse was a mere pigmy compared to Horace in prose (1). » An anonymous writer in the *Quarterly* praised Walpole's verse (2). Some critics then, are of opinion that undoubtedly there exist in Walpole's collection, verses of interest, even to the reader whose tastes are primarily æsthetic. This being so, they are surely worthy of a place in the anthologies which claim to be fairly exhaustive. They belong to a period when occasional lyrics and songs were generally touched up in the most delicate fashion and with much concern for technique, wit and finish. We who are interested in Walpole have, of course, to compile as best we may a picture of the man for our own use. Little scraps, sometimes serve to do this, better than the outcome of more deliberate efforts.

Walpole's poetry helps us to realize how much of a lady's man he was during the second half of his long life. A study of his attempts at poetry, also gives a clear and exact knowledge of the extent and nature of his less known talents. He, no doubt, wished they had been greater : that an « agreeable, lively man, very affected, always aiming at wit », as he appeared in the eyes of his contemporaries (3), could not but succeed in satires, epigrams, witty epistles, was a thing every one might expect in *his* surroundings. Walpole was anxious to fulfil other peo-

Austin Dobson, *Horace Walpole* : a Memoir. — 1. *The Peace of the Augustans*, p. 75. — 2. The *Quarterly Review*, vol. XIX. April-December 1818, p. 122. Croker's probably. — 3. Of Lord Ossory for instance

ple's expectations and, in verse as well as in prose, to live up to his reputation. So much so, that, here as elsewhere, Walpole did not make his case simple. He had not confined himself to occasional verse; he began by making more serious attempts; then he would desist, then, he would try his hand at something else: with such an elusive person, one never knows what to expect, when one tries to get a more definite view of him and of his poetical works.

That Walpole was far from being absolutely ashamed of his poetical achievements is shown by the fact that in 1775 he still distributed printed copies of « the little poems » (1) and also that his acquaintances (Lort for instance in this particular case) (2) thought, it would please him to get information about the subject of his tragedy, *The Mysterious Mother*. He repeats very often, in a deprecating manner, that he is no poet (3) but there is a tone of regret in the recurrence of the statement. Surely there is a melancholy or even bitter reflection in what he says (4) about dispositions which have never matured and should not be

Cf. Cunningham's edition of *Walpole's Letters*, V. p 256 note. — 1. Cf. *Nichol's Illustrations*, vol. VII, p. 534. With regard to this sense of shame or ridicule, with a man of such varied and elusive aspects wherever authorship and the character of an author are in question, it must be borne in mind that, poetic feelings — if not poetry and poets — have, not seldom, been exposed to his sarcasms. Looking back upon his past enthusiasm, « My young imagination he says, was fired with Guido's ideas. Does great youth feed with poetic limbs, as well as with poetic eyes ? » (*Lett.*, March 25.1761. To George Montagu.) Elsewhere, alluding to outspokenness so plainly expressed that it is verging on rudeness and want of civility: « I know, if I was a great poet, I might be so brutal and tell the world in rhyme, that rudeness is a virtue... » and farther on, referring to dress at some social function: « Unless I went in black, like a poet... » — 2. *Ibid.*, See also. Short Notes XLIII. — 3. Cf. *Letters. Toynb. Sup.* 246-252, vol. II. — 4. *Lett.*, To Lort, Nov. 12, 1788.

made too much of, « unless a passion for poetry in any lad (1) of fifteen is a proof of real vocation — an assumption that almost every magazine could confute by the abortions they so frequently exhibit. » Moreover, the sort of pride he took in his poetical performances is borne out by the fact that, in his « Short Notes on my Life », he very minutely recorded all of them. That he should have also collected (in vols. I and IV of his *Works*) pieces which at first seemed professedly written for the closet or the drawing room, is also characteristic of the man.

1. It may not be out of place to point out that the « lad » referred to in this remark of Walpole about his own disillusion, in poetical practice, is no other than Th. Chatterton.

A LIST OF H. WALPOLE'S POEMS CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

1736. — Horace Walpole contributes to the « Cambridge Gratulatio ».
1736. — May 22. The frolic boy unfortunately gay...
1736. — May 30. Plaintive Turtle.
1776-1737. — Seeds of Poetry and rhyme.
1737. — Planetae sunt habitabiles.
1738. — Feb. 2. Verses in memory of King Henry VI. founder of King's College. Cambridge.
1740. — January. Epistle from Florence to the Rev. Thomas Ashton.
1740. — Inscription for a neglected Column at Florence.
1740. — Oct. 2. Love often in the comely mien...
1743. — Oct. 12. I am so nice, — who ever saw a Latin book.
1743. — Nov. 4. Epilogue to Tamerlane.
1743. — Dec. 15. Thou senseless Hall.
1750. — Verses written in April 1750 : Cœlia now had completed...
1751. — The Funeral of the Lioness (Short Notes, XL).
1753. — Nov. The Judgment of Solomon, indicated in Short Notes, XLI, but not found.
1754. — Aug. 6. The Entail (cf. Letters, vol. III, p. 251).
1755. — (?) Lines on Strawberry Hill. Three Stanzas to finish Lord Bath's ballad.
1755. — Dec. 7. « Three Orators... » and Lines on Pitt.
1757. — Nov. Lines to Conway (IV. 113).
1758. — The Parish Register of Twickenham.

1758. — Fugitive pieces printed Short Notes, XLII.
1758. — Epigram on the Archbishop of Canterbury.
1760. — A Poem on the Destruction of the French Navy. Short Notes, XLV.
1761. — Ye simple Astronomers : to the Duchess of Grafton June 13, 1761.
1761. — The Garland. July 19. 1761.
1761. — No Rouge you wear. Dec. 23. 1761.
1763. — Countess Temple appointed Poet Laureate. June 3rd 1763.
1763. — Portrait of John, Earl of Granville.
1763. — Lines to Madame d'Usson and to Madame de Boufflers.
1764. — Verses prefixed to an edition printed at Strawberry Hill of the Poems of Anna Chambers, Countess Temple.
1764. — « Sonnet » on *Otranto*.
1764. — The Magpie and her Brood : a Fable from Bonaventure des Périers.
1765. — May. 26 The Fountain Tree.
1766. — Lines to Madame de Forcalquier speaking English.
1766. — Portrait de Madame du Deffand.
1768. — The Mysterious Mother. Prologue and Epilogue to The Mysterious Mother.
1769. — Epilogue spoken by Mrs Clive on May th 1769 verses to the French party. Cf. Annual Register 1771, p. 258-259.
1771. — Sept. Great Shades of Shakespeare etc... In memory of Thomas Gray.
1771. — Oct. 12. In days of old, here, Ampthill towers were seen...
1772. — Jeffery was a noble wight...
1772. — To a Lady when about five years old, with a present of shells.
1773. — August 13. Your pinks, your tulips live an hour... VIII, 321 and 1773. Nov. 6, Sweetest roses of the year. VIII, 336. Rosette's Epitaph.
1774. — (mentioned in a letter). The Three Vernons.
1775. — Epilogue to *Braganza*.

1777. — (Aug. 19). Our abdicated monarch Lear...
1778. — To Lady C.
1778. — A Card to Lady Blandford.
1779. — Verses: To Lady H. Waldegrave. On the Death of the Duke of Ancaster, 1779. 4°.
1779. — Epilogue to *The Times*, a Comedy by Mrs Griffiths.
1783. — Oct. 9. I love and hate Nancy.
1784. — Nov. 28. From a Castle as vast...
1785. — June 20. Patty was a pretty maid...
1788. — June 29. When mitred masters...
1779. — Verses (printed by the press at Strawberry Hill) to Miss Berry and Miss Agnes.
1790. — Verses (printed by the press at Strawberry Hill) to his Highness Duke of Clarence.
1792. — Epitaphium vivi auctoris.
Date not ascertained. — Some lines in the *Description of Strawberry Hill*. Works II, 393. « On Grignan ».

I

LITERARY CONDITIONS OF THE TIMES. WALPOLE'S POETICAL SURROUNDINGS DURING HIS LIFE, PARTICULARLY IN HIS YOUTH

Poetry more than any other kind of literature may be judged in two ways : absolutely and in isolation, or relatively, that is in its own place and period, and according to the standards of the day and of the country in which it is produced.

It is not a question of mere curiosity then, if, leaving aside masterpieces and great poetical works, one is tempted to cast an inquisitive glance upon more ordinary and humbler productions.

To understand and to appreciate them better, and more sympathetically, we must try to focus them in the right light and to put them into a favourable perspective. Extempore imitations, Society verses, occasional poetry and fugitive pieces, all those light and fanciful productions that flow from the ready pen of a non-professional author, must not be judged in a harsh, pedantic or derisive manner. To be fair to the author, we must bear in mind what he was, what he thought, what he wished or meant to do. We should, if possible, judge him by his own standards,

if he happens to have expressed opinions of his own on poetry in particular. What was his outlook on the poetical world? how did he form his poetical ideals, and how was he influenced by his education and his surroundings?

Nothing should be neglected to get a true insight into the intentions of the writer. If he and his friends have cared to express in their correspondence, journals and diaries, views which may enlighten us as to the intentions of the author, or the influences to which he may have been subjected, such things should be taken into account.

With Walpole they exist, and they form a running commentary which may help us to an intelligent and enlightened appreciation of his poetical works; and this is undoubtedly an advantage, for in Walpole's poetry we have a fairly large number of occasional poems to be read and understood in the light of the times, and with an adequate knowledge and apprehension as to who the author was.

To crown the whole, one single tragedy which cannot be duly appreciated and criticised, unless one knows under what influences, and in what surroundings, it was composed, and what it meant to the man who wrote it.

Then, we have poetry interesting in itself and of not so very mean merit, though it is unquestionably limited both in quantity and in value. But the problem of how to judge this poetry is not so simple. Walpole as a poet has not always been the trifler he sometimes deprecatingly pretends to be. An intelligent sympathy, a lenient tolerance may very well be advocated when dealing with an amateur. But they would be out of place with a man who deliberately attempts the higher kinds of poetry, or

expresses thoughts on the subject which are no longer trifling but are supported by definite argument, and spoken in earnest. In this case, especially if what we know of the author bears testimony to his earnestness of purpose, the standards of criticism to be applied are different. An important work, a long epistle, or a tragedy for instance, calls for more severe consideration than occasional verse.

Fortunately one accompanying commentary is at hand. This, in truth, is so large that it has generally blinded people to the fact that the poetry existed apart from the commentary, which is made up of a huge correspondence, memoirs, essays and so forth. In these various works, in this correspondence with cultured men and women, we may look for original opinions, independent and refreshing views, expressed with the freedom and irresponsibility of a man of the world. To a certain degree the commentary gives its true significance to the poetry ; just as the poetry may explain a certain antinomy, between the author, his poetical ideals, and his attitude towards authorship.

The letters and prose works of Horace Walpole (1), who was a « gentleman author » as he styled himself (2), contain an interesting and intelligent appreciation of the poetry of his times. But before inquiring into his own views on poetry, we may well ask how did gentlemen authors in the XVIII^th century judge poetry in general, and English poetry in particular?

What were their poetical ideals?

Now and then, clever men and women though belonging to the rank and fashion had sometimes taken a serious interest in poetry. Such was, for instance, in the earlier part

1. Ranging from 1735 to 1796. — 2. *Lett.*, VIII, 278. The worldly position of the professional author was not very definite. Cf. Leslie Stephen.

of the century, Lady Winchelsea who had shown herself a poetess of great originality and some merit. At that time, even a « beau » had more connection with poetry and its appreciation and cultivation, than might be expected. Poetry which in English literature had never been neglected by noble hands, was not neglected by them in the middle of the XVIII^th century, when Walpole began to write.

That century saw few men more gifted than Horace Walpole (1), who was a man of great ability, in spite of his affectations. Clever men and clever women, in the English aristocracy were never loath to try their hand at some sort of poetry : for instance Cavendish Duke of Newcastle (2), Rochester (*Poems on several occasions*) (3), Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (4), Margaret Duchess of Newcastle (5), and Robert Nugent, Viscount Clare (6) who wrote an ode on his own conversion. Sir Charles Wyndham, Viscount Egremont made a copy of verse (7) also did John Delawar and Thomas Lyttleton and Granville, Lord Lansdowne (8), who wrote several poems. The political squibs or pamphlets of the day were often written in verse and by noblemen too. Walpole more than once includes in his letters ballads and odes (9), which he conjectures to have been written by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams or by Lord Hervey, one ballad by Lord Bath (10), and many others.

Even such well known political men as Henry Fox,

English Thought in the XVIII^th century, II, 348. — 1. Leslie Stephen. *English Literature and Society*, London, 1904, p. 172 and *Hours in a library*, London, 1892, vol. I, p. 345. — 2. *R. N. A. Works*, vol. I, p. 383. — 3. *Ibid.*, p. 400. — 4. *R. N. A.* p. 478. — 5. Died 1673 ; H. E. Rhys. *Lyric Poetry*, 1913, p. 238. — 6. *R. N. A.*, 549. — 7. *R. N. A.*, *Ibid.*, p. 541. — 8. *Ibid.*, p. 540. — 9. *Letters*, I, 291-296. — 10. *Letters*, I, 301.

Lord Holland (1), or William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (2), had dabbled in poetry. The « delightful petulances » of Lady Mary W. Montagu, the works of Chesterfield and Pulteney, some pieces of Hanbury Williams, of John Stevenson Hall, of R. Edgecumbe, all these show how extensively, though precariously, the art of poetry was cultivated (3).

Walpole had before his eyes a sufficient number of noblemen and gentlemen, who though evincing no particular talent for literary pursuits, had nevertheless made some attempt at verse, not seldom successfully.

Even Sir Robert Walpole, the great minister, had written besides Latin exercises at school, at least one piece of English poetry (4) and Pope alluding to Lord Bath's literary capacities, has said:

« How many Martials in Pulteney were lost (5). »

During Walpole's literary career, Lord Lyttleton was not alone ; ladies and gentlemen of rank wrote poetry. Chesterfield (6), Henry Hare, Lord Colerane, John, Lord Molesworth, Mary, Countess Pembroke, Anna, Viscountess Irwinne, Anna Chambers, Countess Temple (7) and one of Walpole's celebrated contemporaries Lady Mary Wortley Montagu did the same, with some success. In Walpole's own circle, Lord Hervey (8), Mr Chute (9) and Mr Conway (10) wrote short occasional poems. When Walpole began writing poetry, the age literally abounded in poets (11), or more precisely, in poetasters.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 538. — 2. *Ibid.*, p. 539. — 3. Saintsbury. *Peace of the Augustans*, 72. The collections of Dodsley, Pearch, Johnson, Anderson and Chalmers did much however towards the preservation of these poems. — 4. *Memoirs*, London, 1846, appendice K, vol. I, p. 463. — 5. *Works*; vol. IV, p. 214. — 6. *R. A. N. A.*, vol. I, p. 533. — 7. *Ibid.*, p. 551. — 8. *Toyn. Sup.*, I, p. 6, note 3. — 9. *Lett.*, I, 389. — 10. *Lett.*, II, 246-247. — 11. Th. Seccombe. *The Age of Johnson*, p. 223.

At school, and to a certain extent in the Universities, the study and composition of Latin poetry formed the staple training of British youth. Later when he came of age, the wit of the day was expected to establish his standing, if not by a tragedy, then by a poem, in the heroic measure (1). Versifying, if not poetry, became, in the words of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu « as common as taking snuff ». A footman turned bookseller wrote verses and wrote them well : Dodsley's (2) *Muse in Livery* gives an account of his daily life in the form of an Epistle ; others compared this fancy for writing, with an epidemical distemper, « a kind of murrain. » Even material which had very little in it to kindle true poetical fire was turned into verse.

The ease and adaptability of the heroic couplet, had made many people, who boasted of a literary turn of mind, imagine that in some cases poetry was the most appropriate form of expression which to adopt. Perhaps the custom had grown upon the most fashionable among them.

A fop, a beau, a man of the world, might find himself called upon to write a piece of poetry when most unprepared to do so. This he was expected to do, and to do well. The octosyllabic measure also made a large appeal to Walpole's contemporaries.

At that time Edward Moore and before him, Gay, had written fables to please the public at large in its lightest moods. Anapaestic poems also, though the possibilities of the measure were not fully realized (3) were frequently

1. Th. Seccombe. *The Age of Johnson*, p. 223. — 2. Cf. L'Estrange. *History of English Humour*. London, 1878, vol. II, p. 115. — 3. Cf. Saints-

composed, but of course the heroic couplet was prevalent (1). « Indeed, no wonder : in lighter verse (2) the XVIII^th century had been so brilliantly initiated by Swift, and by Prior, that it had no excuse for not keeping up to the mark » and all those people, who were above the reproach of professionalism did no discredit to their artistic teachers. « They could, with apparently no difficulty, knock off epigrams and slight copies of verse of almost, sometimes even, of quite, the first class » (3).

This shows that the generation to which Walpole belonged was particularly interested in the art of poetry, if not in poetry itself.

At a time, when « the ordinary courtesies of invitation and gratitude were expressed in rhyme (4) », and poetry was read and discussed with avidity, a cultivated taste, and the practice of poetry, were usually found hand in hand. Nor was this practice of poetry confined to occasional verse.

Apart from the more elegant inanities and perfunctory occasional verses, the result of fashionable intercourse, there were more ambitious performances, even by gentlemen authors. Subject matter and raw material which (5) would have been much better used in prose essays were turned into that fashionable vehicle of thought : heroic verse.

Occasional poetry was of no great consequence, if bad; if good, it might find a place later, not only in the his-

bury. *The Peace of the Augustans*, London, 1916, p. 74. — 1. Dodsley's « Collection » as extended by Pearch. — 2. Saintsbury. *The Peace of the Augustans*, p. 74. — 3. *Ibid.*, 271. — 4. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, introd. by Arthur Waugh, vol. I. p. XIII, — 5. Th. Seccombe. *Ibid.*, 222.

tory of the evolution of taste, but in literary history proper.

However didactic poetry was literature ; while the longer sort of poems seemed to afford ample opportunities for deeper and more imaginative treatment, fugitive pieces and society verses required nothing but wit, ease and felicity of expression.

The *Miscellanies* of the times (1) bear testimony to the fact. The man about town, as the example of Dennis shows, always evinced a considerable interest in satire and burlesque, an interest which (2) the influence of Scarron in France and Butler in England had greatly fostered.

The essay in verse, the satires, epistles and elegies were also the staple commodities with which the rhymesters of the age, whether professional or not, provided the public.

It does not appear that either the great masters, or their fashionable imitators, realized that fancy and imagination could, by indulging their wilder or more pathetic flights, add something to the poetical beauties of an important poem. Had not Pope (3) boasted that : « Not in Fancy's maze he wandered long. »

« But stooped to truth and moralized his song ? »

Hardly any poetical or emotional imagery fit to please the sensitive mind was at that time generated among the leading poets of the age.

A subject didactic and ratiocinative, arguments very logically connected within the narrow bounds of the couplet, sometimes eloquently put together, but more often merely connected by rhyme : such were the utmost achievements.

1. Lintot's and Tonson's *Miscellanies* this one almost entirely devoted to Dryden had appeared before 1712. — 2. Cf. H.-G. Paul. *John Dennis : his life and his criticism*. New-York, 1911, p. 177. — 3. Epistle to

For the lesser kinds of poems, the treatment in vogue might well be accepted, when an animated, witty and picturesquely incisive style gave to the piece some sprightliness. For the more serious poems such brilliant treatment should not have been sufficient. Yet in fact, these longer poems were written very much after the same standard.

The manner and the doctrine of the so-called school of Pope had reached their culmination in his writings. Since his time, Dr Johnson, the sturdiest of all believers in the canons of common sense, had greatly maintained the fame of Pope, both in his criticisms and by his own works. The tradition of the classical school was followed till the end of the xviiith century. To all outward appearances from 1750 to 1800, the obvious and visible tendency of poetry was an imitation, conscious or unconscious, but generally conscious, of Pope (1). « During this very period, verse as a medium of serious literary expression, was never more popular. It apparently found readers as well as writers : the booksellers undertook the production and distribution of versified works constructed on a scale that would terrify the hardiest publisher of to-day, and the interest aroused by such performances was often quite genuine. Hence many respectable persons, with few solid claims to poetical genius, were led into the attempt, by dull obedience and by creeping toil, to conquer the severe ascent of high Parnassus (2). »

Occasional poetry is then no longer alone in question ; each man of literary propensities, dutifully turns his hand to the Ode, the Elegy, the Satire and also Tragedy.

Arbuthnot, 341. — 1. Cf. J. Macmillan Brown. *Manual of English Literature*, p. 108-109, I, London, 1894. — 2. Millar. *The Mid. XVIII th Century*

He has his own opinions on such matters, though in fact he often swears by the gospel of Dryden, Pope and Johnson. These efforts, though futile as regards posthumous renown, were, in point of more substantial and immediate reward (1), probably more fruitful than might be imagined.

Now H. Walpole's youth, fell in the period when Pope's influence was still very great (2) and was being upheld so far as form, style and versification were concerned, by the great autocrat Johnson (3).

The second quarter of the XVIII^th^ century, at the end of which Walpole began, and the third quarter throughout which he continued to write, were still dominated by the poetical ideals of Pope. The great sway which classicism held over English literature at the end of the century, is forcibly brought home to us by the clamorous and widespread success of some poems which appeared at its very close. The *Pleasures of Memory* by Samuel Rogers (1792) and the *Pleasures of Hope* by Thomas Campbell (1799) The poems of Knight (4) and those of D^r^ Darwin especially met with the most favourable reception. Darwin's poem *The Botanic Garden* was received with loud and sympathetic applause (5). This poem like so many others which had preceded it, was one of the rather weak imitations of the *Essay on Man* and, though full of variegated epi-

Edinburgh and London, 1902, p. 176. — 1. Millar. *The Mid. XVIII*th *Century*, Edinburgh and London, 902 p. 176 and Saintsbury. *The Peace*... etc., p. 90. « Astonishing relative position was gained by poetical efforts ». — 2. Pope died in 1744. The great edition of his works was published in 1751. — 3. Johnson's *London*, 1738. *Vanity of Human wishes*, 1749. Prologue to Goldsmith's *Good Natured Man*, 1769. — 4. Richard Payne Knight, 1750-1824. — 5. Cf. G. Cestre. *La Révolution française et les Poètes anglais*, 1789-1809, p. 232 et suivantes. Cowper. *Lines addressed to D. Darwin*, 1792. Coleridge's *Letters* Feb. 1797, I, 215. W. Scott. Preface to Miss

sodes, it conformed, on the whole, to the traditional type of poetry.

Such was the strength of classical tradition during Walpole's literary career. Such was the conscious and orthodox view of the enlightened part of the public.

Yet among men of letters, other influences were at work, of which they were not very fully aware themselves, but which they could not help feeling.

It should be borne in mind that Voltaire's *Essay on epic Poetry* (Essai sur la poésie épique) (1) contained many interesting new ideas. He was not in favour of rules (2) and thought that a submissive imitation of the ancients was not to be advised (3). He spoke of such an imitation in a contemptuous manner. We should not blindly admire everything he said (4) as many passages in the Greek and Latin poets are unquestionably flat and insipid. Beside the love of nature, and the tendencies shown by James Thomson (5), Shenstone, Collins and the Landscape poets (6), there were other propensities and idiosyncrasies that imposed themselves more and more powerfully upon sensitive and imaginative minds. A disposition towards melancholy seemed to make at least two generations repeat what Fletcher had said many years before them :

« Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy. »

E. Young (7), Blair (8) and Thomas Gray (9) gave to these sad and pensive thoughts their deepest and most perfect

Seward's works, Edinburgh, 1810. — 1. Published in 1726 in English by Voltaire, cf. p. 302-304. *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, Paris, 1877. — 2. *Ibid*, p. 306. — 3. *Ibid.*, p. 312. — 4. P. 313. — 5. Thomson's *Winter*, 1726. *Summer*, 1727. *Spring*, 1728. — 6. Dyer's *Grongar Hill*. W. Mason's *The English Garden*, 1757. — 7. *Night Thoughts*, 1742-1744. — 8. The *Grave*, 1744. — 9. *The Elegy*, 1751 circ.

expression. In fact, a great, though unconscious and unobtrusive effort, was made to strike new sources of inspiration. During « the twenty-five years (1) from the publi- « cation of Thomson's *Winter* 1726, to that of the *Elegy* « 1751, the nine or ten leading poems or collections of « verse which appeared, were all of a new type, sombre « as a rule, certainly stately, romantic in tone to the « extreme, prepared to return, ignorantly indeed, but « with respect, to what was Gothic in manners, architecture and language. » This is true no doubt ; but the limits of this Gothic tendency should not be extended too far, at any rate in literature, though this very tendency was indeed far deeper than those who felt it realized. One of the English poets who had found the greatest allurement in the study and contemplation of the past ages, Thomas Warton, was reduced to a partial and, at least apparent, abandonment of poetry because (2) of the lack of sympathy of his contemporaries with his Gothic Muse.

Thomas Gray, though thoroughly imbued with the classical spirit, wrote quite often in a romantic vein. His scantiness of production is accounted for by some critics, in the same way (3)· He was too much out of sympathy with his surroundings, and yet though he and Warton (we dare not say W. Mason for he was hardly a genuine poet) felt « the horror of the Midnight Spell (4) » of « the grim and antique tower » (5) of many a « raptured

1. E. Gosse. *XVIII*th *century literature*, London, 1890, p. 207.— 2. Clara Rinaker. *Thomas Warton*. Urbana, 1916, p. 34-35, 122 also L. Cazamian. *L'Evolution psychologique et la Littérature en Angleterre*, Paris, 1920, p. 118, 128 to 130. — 3. Cf. Matthew Arnold's theory about Gray, p. 211-213, etc. *The English poets*, edited by T.-H. Ward., vol. III, 1892. — 4. Imitated from Propertius, Lib. II, Eleg. I, liv. 85. — 5. Gray

thought and vision wild » (1), these men had some qualms, when they had to own to themselves where their sympathies lay. Warton has in many places borne testimony to the fact that he was most deeply impressed by « the ancient art » ; by this he means Gothic architecture which displays « her dreadful fancies in the quaint mazes of the crisped roof (2) », « the clustered column massy proof » and in the « mellow glooms of the window pane », the « speaking pane » as Warton calls it. Yet the poet is not inspired here, either by piety, or by religious feeling. He expresses hatred and contempt for the so-called monkish creeds and practices. And it is the glamour, the picturesqueness of the past ages which pervades his soul and sensibility. When he realizes that he is much in advance of his time (3), he grows afraid, almost ashamed of himself and he recants. He begs for a sort of compromise (4) between submissive recognition of the beauties of Attic art and the acknowledgement of the deep poetical and imaginative impressions made by mediæval art. Warton does not seem to have understood that a recantation was not necessary. Macpherson with his *Ossian*, Percy with his *Ballads*, Chatterton with his poetry, all did much to open, as he did, new vistas of thought to those who in the second half of the XVIII[th] century had a poetic mind.

Now Horace Walpole was a very intimate friend of Thomas Gray the poet. Gray was no more than the

Dante : passage chosen from canto 33. — 1. Cf. Cl. Rinaker, p. 130. Thomas Warton : *Sonnet to M^r Gray*. — 2. Cf. Cl. Rinaker. *o. c. Ode written at Vale Royal abbey in Cheshire*. — 3. Cf. Herford. *The Age of Wordsworth*, introd., p. xx and p. 163 about the progress of Wordsworth's sensibility as exemplified by his way of treating of *Tintern abbey*, 1798. Bolton abbey 1807 (*White Doe*). *Milan cathedral* and *King's College Chapel*, 1820. — 4. Rinaker, p. 139. *Sonnet on Reynold's windows*. —

Wartons (1), the sort of man to be at the head of a school of poetry with his « want of love for general society and indeed an inability to it (2) ». Yet he had a certain influence on Walpole who professed to show great enthusiasm for his poems (3). Walpole was in close touch with the efforts of that man, altogether stronger in mind than himself, intellectually, at least, and far more poetically gifted.

More than once, Walpole was called upon to give his opinions on some poetical subject, and he responded freely. He was a correspondent of Percy and Th. Warton ; in the Ossian controversy he was interested to some extent. In the Chatterton controversy, he was far more concerned than he cared to own. He himself was very fond of the theatre and though he did not attempt real comedy, he actually wrote a tragedy of no mean order. Moreover, the part he played in the literary and artistic history of his century had a great deal to do with the revival of the Gothic spirit in England.

During the formative period of his youth, at Eton and at Cambridge, the bent of his mind, his private training and his literary pursuits, like those of his friends, were mainly poetical.

These young boys who, as Walpole himself says, « never made an expedition against bargemen, or won a match at cricket », had a fanciful and poetical turn of mind as the pseudonyms they had taken (4), and the fact

1. Cf. Leslie Stephen. *Hours in a Library*. Gray and his school : *Hours in a library*, vol. III, p. 101. — 2. P. Toynbee. *The Cor*, vol. II, p. 4, Gray to West. — 3. That the theory of a school of the Wartons is fallacious (even when the idea is pressed but very little) appears from the fact that Gray and Walpole almost ignored Shenstone, that Gray was very scanty of praise when speaking of Collins and that, if Walpole mentions one Collins, it is not the poet but the genealogist. — 4. Cf. Toynb. *The*

of their having taken them, seems to indicate. Orosmades, Zephirus or Zephirille or even Celadon (1) show what dreamy and imaginative tendencies possessed these young students. The idea of competition and also of failure was not wholly absent from some of Walpole's youthful thoughts. « Both Gray and West had abilities marvellously premature... What unpoetic things were mine, at that age, some of which unfortunately do exist ! » (Lett. to Mason, Nov. 27th 1773). He said to West that he sometimes indulged in the art of poetry. « As to myself, I assure you, I don't think I am at all a poet, but from loving verses, try to make some now and then » (December 3rd 1736).

The correspondence of Walpole, or more especially of Gray and West, is replete with poetical reminiscences and poetical allusions (2). Though, as Walpole and Gray testify, classics have fallen into great contempt at Cambridge (3), their letters breathe a true poetical spirit (4); they (5) earnestly feed on « the delicate food of Parnassus » which is not astonishing after their studies at Eton, and, as Walpole says to West (6) « the way you were brought up in : poetry ». Walpole expressly notes, in a tone of deepest regret (7) : « We have not the least poetry stirring here » (at Cambridge) for of course latin poetry and perfunctory verses did not count as such. Yet these spirited young men, Walpole's friends, Gray, West

Cor, vol. I, introduct., xviii. — 1. Cf. Toyn. *The Cor*, vol. I, introd., xviii. Walpole's name taken from the amorous Shepherd in *l'Astrée* or the swain so called in Thomson's *Summer*. — 2. P. Toynbee. *The Cor*, p. 8, vol. I. *Julius Cesar*, *Paradise Lost*, « Greek anthology » mentioned among them by Gray, p. 93, *Paradise Lost*, etc. — 3. *The Cor.*, vol. I, p. 111. — 4. Cf. West to Gray, vol. I, p. 115. *The Cor* about Tibullus. — 5. *The Cor. Ibid.*, p. 98. — 6. *The Cor*, I, p. 98. — 7. Walpole to West, 9 nov.

and Ashton, and Walpole himself, make a very vigorous stand against such pitiful conditions and uncongenial surroundings. They discuss poetical matters, and even such an unpoetical and dry as dust person as Ashton, attempts versifying (1). They send each other pieces of poetry which they criticize freely. In this little coterie, West, undoubtedly plays the leading part; as well as Gray, he had, on leaving Eton, the reputation of a good classical scholar and at this time was reckoned the more brilliant genius of the two. His letters are full of his attempts at poetical performances and up to the moment of his death, he shows great fire and pathos and enthusiasm. He was a very precocious lad and certainly gifted (2). His poetical attempts greatly outnumber those of his friends. After his untimely death, Gray and Walpole cultivated poetry each in his own way and these ways were widely different.

A study of Walpole's opinions on poetry and on poets may help us to a truer estimate of his parts, and talents, enabling us to understand up to what point he was conscious of the literary tendencies of his times and mirrored them in his poetry.

1735. — 1. Cf. *The Cor*, I, 329. — 2. Cf. *The Cor*, appendix C. Original Poems: Latin and French imitations.

II

THE POETICAL IDEALS OF AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN AUTHOR IN THE XVIIIth CENTURY. WALPOLE'S CRITICISMS ON POETRY AND POETICAL WORKS

Though he made less effort than many of his contemporaries, to secure a poetical garland of lasting fame, Walpole did write verse, and his opinions on poetry and poetical works are not those of a mere critic who has never tried his hand at the art he criticises, still less of an amateur who takes but a passing interest in the subject. They are the opinions of a man who paid fairly close attention to poetical matters, and who, as we shall see, tried to win, through his own verse, the plaudits of a limited, but cultivated circle, and to some extent those of posterity.

In the first case, it is interesting and necessary to know what judgments have been passed by great writers and masters of criticism, upon either works, of permanent and recognized value, or on writings of a comparatively inferior class and quality, and of transient fame. But it is equally interesting to know what were the feelings of the average intelligent public, who made part of the audience, when the works came out. This latter attempt is the business proper of literary history.

In the record of the evolution of taste, besides such

opinions as may be expressed by professional critics in the reviews and periodicals of the day, the opinions of an intelligent reader, such as Walpole, are interesting to note.

Walpole's attitude towards poetry has, from this point of view, been too much neglected (1) : his poetry has never been collected by any editor ; both poetry and poetical criticism are scattered throughout his voluminous Works, they have not been drawn out and selected for record, any more than his poetical career has been followed by an attentive biographer.

From what we know of the man, what then may be the value of his testimony on poetical matters and of his estimate of poetry ? In addition to memory, Walpole was also endowed with sensibility and, to a certain extent, with imaginative and inventive power. He valued originality, and, in matters of taste, paid attention to composition and good arrangement of the subject.

Sensibility in those days and especially a little later was no longer a mere empty word. When Gray (2) reported that the Cambridge dons used to cry a little after having read the *Castle of Otranto*, this may not have been exaggerated satire, but the bare expression of truth.

Some twenty-five years before, the set of young men to whom Walpole belonged at Eton, was highly sensitive (3). West and Gray were easily moved.

Walpole's physical sensitiveness and moral sensibility were equally great. His nerves were easily on edge ; he

1. His poetical criticism is very summarily dealt with in *Oxford XVIIIth Century Studies*. — 2. In 1764. — 3. West. Cf. *The Cor*, I, 231, confessed himself ashamed to cry when reading some of Crébillon's letters : On Gray's sensibility see : *The Cor*, I, 92-94 and 155-156. —

*

was very impatient, and quickly disturbed by little things; wherever he alludes to the death of an animal, the death of Tory (1), or of Tonton or of Rosette, he is more or less deeply affected. Death especially, so common a theme among poets (2), made a deep impression on him. He was much distressed by the illness and sufferings of human beings (3). He was glad he did not know (4) of his friend Selwyn's illness till he was out of danger; otherwise, he says, with characteristic exaggeration, it would have been too much for him. Indeed Walpole is rather inclined to press the point upon his audience. When in Florence, on being told « just at going to bed » that a poor man « had been beheaded here, this morning, for stealing a cup out of a church » Walpole « could not sleep for thinking of the unhappy wretch ». Such offences then against the Church of Rome deserved capital punishment (5)! Severity of this kind greatly incensed him against the power of the « Romish Church ». During his youth he complacently insisted upon this sensitiveness of mind. Sometimes, as we see, he asserted his ready indignation; sometimes he was not averse to the display of a melancholy mood, of a « pensive joy » such as he felt when, walking along the Cherwell, in Magdalen College, he thought of the two Lyttletons, who had been drowned there, and wrote a piece of poetry accordingly. Likely enough, in later life, this gift of sensibility, this nervous sensitiveness were greatly diminished.

Yet (6), whenever any of his friends died, Chute, Gray,

1. Geath of Tory (*Lett.*, vol. I, p. 52). — 2. One of the main lyrical themes according to Brunetière. — 3. Walpole faints when seeing a wretch who is disciplining himself. Cf. Gray to West. *The Cor*, I, 286. The way in which Th. Gray looked upon Lady Walpole's death : what my poor Horace must feel. — 4. *Lett.*, I. p. 59. — 5. *Toynb. Sup.*, I, 38-39 and *The Cor*, vol. I, 155-156, May 22nd 1746. — 6. Soon after his

or M^me^ du Deffand, Walpole always made a show of sincere warmth of feeling and genuine, though often rather egotistical and loud, sorrow.

To this nervous sensibility were added unquestionable gifts of imagination.

He did not turn them to literary purpose perhaps as much as he might have done. But undoubtedly such gifts were his. How often did he tell M^me^ du Deffand, that in order to forget the unpleasant realities of life, he, not seldom, took refuge in visions (1), the outcome of which were the *Castle of Otranto* and the *Hieroglyphic Tales* (2). His acquaintances very soon detected the power Walpole had of displaying such gifts in description. For instance, alluding to what his fashionable friend said in one of his characteristic fits of sham modesty, West answers (3), expressly contending that he means no flattery: « Your description of the Alps made me shudder, « but I don't see any occasion you have, to wish you were « a poet, or to wish for your humble servant at least in « this capacity, since you give such a description so very « poetically, nay there is a couple of verse, which per- « haps you did not take notice of when you write it.

« Others all shagg'd with hanging woods, obscured in « (with) pines or lost in clouds. They are so good, that I « could wish they had not been alone as they are. I shall « consider them as a fragment. »

return from Italy, Walpole will relate (*Lett.*, Aug. 1. 1746 and *sqq.*) the execution of the rebel Lords, with the coolness and self restraint of an artist. — 1. Cf. for instance *Toynb. Sup.*, I, p. 223. — 2. These are very wild and so fantastically fanciful that they do not afford much pleasant reading. — 3. Oct. 15.1739. *The Cor*, I, p. 251. The letter to which West alludes contains the word « romantic », used very early by Walpole. Cf. *Lett.* Sept. 28.1739.

Walpole's feeling for nature was not perhaps particularly deep or exalted ; it existed all the same ; nature meant something more to him than a trim garden (1). He deplored that in gardens the romantic beech (2) should be corrected into a tree of stupid aspect by lovers of symmetry.

His powers of invention he underrated, or at least he felt some reluctance in using them. « I have left myself at the mercy of my own powers of invention, he says in a letter, a most terrible resource, and which I shall avoid applying to, if I can possibly help it (3) » (Feb. 18 th 1768, to Gray), and he concludes. « My writings are the most hasty trifles in the world... though I may be fond of the subject when fresh... » « My own understanding is of a very inferior kind », he said also, to Miss Berry, « and I know it to be incapable of sound, deep application »... adding that his pursuits have always been light and trifling, and that they tended to nothing but casual amusement (4).

Though he said so, partly with a view to courting compliments, it was also because he realized the difficulties of the art and practice of poetry, and judged of this art and his own achievements, accordingly (5).

With regard to Walpole's attitude towards poetry, it should above all be borne in mind that though he is not « un critique pour rire (6) » there in nothing dogmatic or professional about him. His criticism must not be looked

1. His *Essay on Gardening*. One of the reasons he had, beside national pride for supporting the English form and landscape gardening, was that he was so fond of poetical and natural landscape. — 2. *Essay on Gardening. Anecd. Paint.* (*Dall*), III, p. 70. — 3. *Lett.* I, p. 31. — 4. He goes on to say that « the representation of an author of mediocrity like himself is very insignificant. — 5. Cf. May 11 th 1769, to Mason : It is true I early wished to be one (a poet) but soon found I was not. — 6. We cannot completely agree with Th. Seccombe's opinion : cf. *The Age of*

at in that light, but taken for what it really is : the judgments and opinions of a man who (1) has a liveliness of manner in conveying his sentiments, an intelligent pertinence in his observations, a brilliant smartness in his mode of passing critical judgments. Much of this poetical criticism is to be found in works ostensibly written to instruct, but also to *amuse* the writer, as well as the public (2), or still more frequently in letters written with the intention of diverting his friends. In the latter case, caution and fairness might sometimes be sacrificed to the pleasure of delivering some light and covert jest into which Walpole was surprised by the ambition of being entertaining. One should remember that he is not always in earnest. Moreover he has been taxed with inability to appreciate the really great men of letters of his time, but it is this very independence which makes « what he wrote so well worth reading (3). »

It is true enough, however, that this independence was not absolute independence. It was in some ways affected. He even made a parade of negligence (4), — so great, was the « constitutional aversion », under which he laboured — lest he should be liable to any suspicion of professionalism or pedantry. « Pedantry », Walpole is supposed to have said (5), is « an erroneous dignity which distorts or prevents grace ». This is a most grievous fault in the eyes of Walpole, for (6) he set « grace » above everything.

Johnson, p. 49. « As a connoisseur of fine literature he was far below Chesterfield »; « far » is too strong. — 1. Cf. Park. *Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors* (*continued*), vol. IV, p. 371. — 2. Cf. *Catalogue of the Noble and Royal Authors*. Prefaces to *The Castle of Otranto*. Essays in *the World*. *Thoughts on Comedy*. — 3. *Eighteenth Century Studies*, p. 104. — 4. Cf. I.-H. Millar. *The Mid-Eighteenth Century*, p. 307. — and. *XVIII* th *Century Studies*, p. 105. — 5. *Walpoliana*, II, p. 51-52. — 6. *Lett.*, XIII, 281.

Besides, he was often influenced in his estimate of men and manners by narrow or conflicting ideas, especially regarding the writers of his own set, « our first writers » as he called them, or even gentlemen, or ladies especially, to whom, in duty bound and for politeness'sake, he must pay compliments. But since the interest he took in poetry was great, it is no doubt worth while studying the opinions held on poetical matters, by a man who (1), as a statesman, as a poet and as a man of the world, knew so well the surroundings, in which he lived. He was gifted with a quick and retentive memory, he had taste, he was well read, much better informed on poetical matters than most other members of his own set.

Moreover, just as Horace, the Latin poet, in his *Epistle to the Pisos*, wrote in fact a poetical treatise, Walpole in some of his letters, dispensed with the style of an epistolary writer, in order to assume the attitude of an intelligent adviser, in theatrical matters for instance, in his letters to Jephson (2).

After all, on these poetical questions, Walpole had by no means so versatile or inconstant a taste as his reputation would lead us to suppose. Even if he had expressed opinions now and then contradictory, it might be pardonable. But his ideas are generally consistent and to the point.

From the literary point of view, Walpole had a cultivated and refined taste. He may have affected to attach little or no importance to this (3), but it was probably because he vas vexed by « this question of a good taste

1. Cf. Sir W. Scott. *Lives of the Novelists*, London, 1910, p. 210. — 2. They form a companion work to his *Thoughts on Comedy* and have been reproduced under the title of *Letters on Tragedy*. Cf. *Works*. — 3. *Lett.* Dec. 9th 1758, and about Lord Rochford's poetry.

or a bad taste » in poetry, that he refused to take it as much to heart as his correspondent West. Unquestionably (1) « Nature » and « Taste » were his two main principles. Besides, as may be seen from his letters, he was not deficient in a strong feeling for words, and he had (2) an aptitude for rhythm. He was not unacquainted with the mechanical parts and the technicalities of the art (3). This, not only because he tried his hand at it, but also because his reading of poetry was very wide. Though not so remarkably extensive as his reading in prose, it was still very great and comparatively scholarly. Greek poets to a certain extent, Latin poets in a very large degree during his youth, Italian poets at a certain period of his life, and throughout, French and English poets, were not only read but sometimes closely studied, and inwardly digested (4).

He kept abreast of the contemporary movement in poetry, though both in France and in England, but in France especially, he did not look upon it very favourably.

What were, then, his poetical ideals ? With regard to these, three principal and characteristic facts stand out among the others. First, he despises epic poetry, and especially looks upon it as being an altogether insuitable kind of poetry, for our own times. He regards it as ludicrous. Secondly he disdains contemporary French poetry, and indeed, French poetry in general : « The French are not poets (5) ». Thirdly, Walpole is especially fond of dramatic poetry, and of the drama as a whole. Comedy had particular attractions for him, and he always regretted that he had not more seriously turned his hand to it (6).

1. *Toynb. Sup.*, I, 218.—2. Cf. West's letter as above.— 3. With the difficulties of rhyme for instance and the influence it may have on the powers of expression. — 4. See further. — 5. Cf. *Toynb. Sup.*, vol. I, p. 176. — 6. Cf. *Works*, II, p. 320. He attempted comedy writing in prose, in his one act.

Leaving dramatic poetry aside, as a special kind to be dealt with later on, at more length and separately, it is clear that Walpole has some fairly consistent and interesting ideas of his own, on the subject of poetry in general.

That Walpole had a strong contempt for epic poetry is not to be wondered at. It is true, he seems to have been fond of the Latin classical poets during his youth. He quotes and not infrequently imitates Vergil among them. But this was at a rather early date ; later, when out of humour, the Greeks and the Romans did not fare so well with him ; any how, this early fondness does not mean that epic poets were among those particularly relished : probably they were not, and more than one instance points to bucolic or lyrical poetry as having his preference. For example the *Georgics* are more frequently quoted perhaps than the *Æneid*.

Romances are at least entertaining. How different is the case of the epic poem which wants to pass itself off for what it is not ; and who supports these false pretensions ? The pedants, a race which Walpole abominates. « A mere epic poem, I know nothing more tedious, the « story of the *Æneid* is silly and unaffecting (1) », and « again : an epic poem ! that most senseless of all the spe- « cies of poetic composition, though pedants call it the « chef-d'œuvre of the human mind (2). »

This kind of poem is responsible for the failure of all those who have attempted to use it, and this sweeping condemnation (3) passed upon Vergil, Dante and even Mil-

play *Nature will prevail*, but did not even then manage to finish his work satisfactorily.—1. *Lett.*, December 9th 1758.—2. *Lett.*, XII, 273.—3. Cf. *Lett.*, XII, 273-274 see also for Walpole's contempt of epic poetry. *The Berry's journal*, p. 50-51, vol. II, and the beginning of *The Life of Thomas Baker* where he simply spurns aside Homer and Vergil as benefactors of human kind : « What benefactions has Homer or Vergil conferred on mankind. » *Works*,

ton, leaves only Homer and Lucan untouched. Homer, because he is probably too sacred in the eyes of posterity, and Lucan for political reasons. This special partiality for Lucan as an original author, Walpole quite frankly admitted (1) : « I prefer Lucan to Vergil, to speak fairly, I prefer great sense to poetry with little sense (2). »

Some of the reasons of this disdainful attitude are expressed by Walpole, and we may guess at others. This species of poetry is « absurd (3) », it is also « tiresome (4) », and Walpole has summed up his indictment in the following « definitions of epic poetry (5). The art of being as « long as possible in telling an uninteresting story (6) ». This is a mere caprice ; the next two, may prove more interesting. An epic poem according to Walpole is a « mix- « ture of history without truth, and of romance without « imagination (7) ». Then alluding not so much to the narrative character of this poetry, but rather to the heroes introduced, the feelings expressed and the general tone of the poem, he goes on to say (8) something, which, no doubt, means much for him. « Heroic poetry is not suited to an improved and polished state of things. » Walpole never thought of epic poetry for himself, except in a burlesque way (9). He sends to M^me^ du Deffand the sketch of a burlesque epic poem about d'Alembert and Marmontel, and the only epic poem he really cared for was a « burlesque epic » the *Lutrin* (10).

II, 341. — 1. Lucan is a man who alone of all the classics was thought to breathe too brave and honest a spirit for the perusal of the Dauphin and the French. *Lett.*, Dec. 19, 1758 ; moreover he was « un auteur précieux pour nous autres presque républicains ». — 2. *Lett.* Dec. 9, 1758. — 3. Exceedingly few have succeeded in epic poetry « from the absurdity of the species » (*Lett.*, XII, 273). — 4. « I am by no means popular », he says, referring to his opinions of Voltaire's *Pucelle*. It is as tiresome as if it were really an epic poem. — 5. XII, 273. — 6-7. *Ibid.* — 8. *Lett.* XII, 274. — 9. Cf. *Toyn. Sup.*, vol. I, p. 177. — 10. *Lett.*, XII, 274.

Walpole indeed, bears such a grudge against the epic poem that he probably enjoys pointing out the degraded condition into which it has fallen in modern times. Ossian, « the last of the bastard race (1) » of epic poets, had left him unpleasant memories, after a momentary fit of enthusiasm. But what Walpole says about epic poetry in general also conforms too much (2) with his character, and is too consistent with his ordinary opinions not to be looked upon as a genuine expression of what he really thought. These opinions, which in the eyes of a classical man of letters seem pure heresy, are quite characteristic of Walpole (3).

Epic Poetry according to him « is a sort of history without truth (4) ». The fact that this opinion, summed up at the end of his life, was rank heresy, was not altogether displeasing to him, as he was always fond of displaying originality of thought.

Moreover he who knew how false, how contemptuous, or how ignorant of actual facts, even real history was ; he who, as an attentive annalist and writer of memoirs, perceived how hard it was to get at the true facts, could not relish the fulsome parody of truth which is sometimes afforded by an epic poem.

It is quite natural that he should have been exasperated by this kind of poem, which gives to everything a heroic, poetical and legendary glamour, qualities which he knew, too well, to be deceptive, in spite of its assumed pomposity. His deep and extensive knowledge of curious and informing anecdotes made him sceptical about heroes,

1. *Lett.*, XII 274. — 2. Walpole most likely resented the too quick and ready way with which he had welcome Ossian's appearance among the literary world of his time and at first given, his implicit faith in his genuineness. — 3. *Toyn. Sup.*, vol. I, p. 176-177. — 4. *Lett.*, XII, 274.

whom he refused to look at with the eyes of the pedant, or of the vulgar. He who would not read Vertot's « *Revolutions of Rome* », because « il y a longtemps que les Grecs et les Romains m'ennuient à la mort (1) » was not likely to think much of the fabulous and stilted stories of the *Æneid*. He was no more fond of Heroes than he was of idols or of martyrs (2). The bent of his mind was much too satirical and cynical for erring on the side of admiration. A shrewd and well informed mature man, living among « an improved and polished state of things », he knew better than that. He did not care for second hand solemnity (3) ; and this is why you should allow such latitude to heroic poetry as to admit the *Lutrin*, the *Dispensary*, the *Dunciad* as epic poems (4). He did not, in consequence like an author who took himself seriously, when he was « but an ape of the Greeks (5) ».

That he was not unaware of the amount of ridicule which might be incurred by the artificial ornaments of poetry, and especially by those which had prevailed in his youth, may be seen from what he says (6) to George Montagu : « We will affect to have a summer and you know « we have no title to such a thing. Our poets learnt their trade « of the Romans and so adopted the terms of their « masters ; They talk of shady groves, purling streams « and cooling breezes... Master Damon writes a song and « writes to Miss Chloe to enjoy the cool of the eve- « ning..... » and later he will say : « We still trade upon the stock of the Ancients, we seldom deal in any other manufacture. »

1. This he confesses in French to M^me^ du Deffand. Nov. 13. 1770. *Toyn. Sup.*, I, 191. — 2. His angry disparagement of Sir Philip Sidney in his *Catalogue*, his dislike of Wesley are cases in point. — 3. *Lett.*, X, 424. — 4. *Lett.*, XII, 274. — 5. *Lett.*, X, 424. — 6. *Lett.*, June 15th 1768.

Being himself no devotee to the ancient times, the blind lovers of antiquity fared ill under his lashing sarcasm in his *Catalogue* (1). He himself could but smile at this stock of gods, goddesses and heroes whom he found ridiculous. Romances indeed were absurd, but their absurdity was compensated by agreeableness. Their very absurdity was « an agreeable absurdity ». Romances were not usually stilted in their language ; they did not want to impose dignified, mythological traditions, embellished with purely poetical and verbal pomposities and hackneyed artificialities (2). Walpole was a downright « Modern » in more than one sense. He preferred romances because they shook off the shackles of pedantry and were meant to entertain.

Now, Walpole wanted to be amused, and to have free scope for his imagination. As regards poetry more especially, he wanted something which, unlike such flat performances as Sir George Lyttelton's or Akenside's numbers, could reanimate the age (3). « Insipidity », is one of things he jeers at ; « originality » is what he likes « above all (4) ». « It is the first of merits in the latter ages ». Then the next thing he thought most proper, above all for an enlightened age, is both in poetry and prose : « that genteel air (5) that flows from, and constitutes grace ». Addison was master of that grace, but

1. *Lett.*, February 1770. To Mann. — 2. Walpole's Nichols' *Illustrations*) (p. 185, v. III, unfavourable opinion of D^r^ Akenside was far from being shared by his contemporaries who (as for instance G. Hardinge) looked upon him as a poetical writer of a very high form. — 3. Cf. *Catalogue of R. and N. A.*, vol. I, p. 88. A covert sly and contemptuous satire at « the period of so much time as constitutes a certain and unlimited right to the admiration of the lovers of antiquity. » — 3 and 4. Cf. *The Cor.*, II, p. 88. — 5. *Lett.*, X, 409 and. *Lett.*, XII, 274.

only in his pieces of humour (1-2). Brevity and concision of expression were two of the other most important requisites in the eyes of Walpole ; Lucan (3) had sometimes more in one line than Vergil, in a whole book ; Claudian and Statius, pale imitators of Lucan, had « none of his quintessence ». Originality, grace, brevity, all these requisites of his admiration show that throughout his life, he kept up the liking he had very early expressed for refined inspiration (4). With its lengthy and flat episodes, the epic poem is, on the contrary, in his eyes, the crudest, most puerile, and least refined form of poetry the ancients have given us.

His condemnation of French poetry was as sweeping as that of the epic poem : not on altogether unjust grounds. Knowledge of French was by no means, for critics, an unusual accomplishment. Critics, not only Dryden but Dennis had a very fair knowledge (5) of French literature : but Walpole in a somewhat rough and ready manner anticipates the theory (6) that « the power of French literature is in its prose writers ». Possibly Gray's opinions (7) may have had something to do with it. Walpole however could very well judge things for himself : of the French poetry of the Renaissance, he does not seem to have taken any account : « The French, says he (8), have never had « a Homer or a Pindar, nor probably will have. Voltaire « could make nothing more like an epic than the *Hen-* « *riade*, and Boileau and Rousseau have succeeded so

1. *Lett.*, XIII, p. 281, to Pinkerton. — 2. See also *Lett.*, XIII, 281. — 3. *Lett.*, XII, 273-274. — 4. *Lett.*, I, p. 9.

5. H.-G. Paul. *o. c.*, p. 109. — 6. Matthew Arnold's. H. Walpole « excommunicated French from verse » (*Lett.*, XIV, 101). — 7. As expressed in his letter to West (*The Cor.*, II, 27). French verse where the thought or image, does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. — 8. *Lett.*, IX, 419.

« little in their odes that the French still think that « ballad wright Quinault, their best lyric poet. »

Walpole, who has admired Boileau elsewhere, probably thought that the fault might be laid at the door of French critics who wanted to subdue everything to regularity (1). He was consistent in his appreciation of La Fontaine, who, though he seems to be writing for children, has a great charm for all ages. Walpole imitated one of his Fables, *The Funeral of the Lioness* and one *Conte.*

Voltaire deserves applause, chiefly when he writes the sort of poem, which is perhaps nearest to prose : an epistle, and in particular his *Epistle to Boileau.*

Leaving tragedy aside, the only French poetry to which Walpole admiringly alludes, is burlesque ; the *Lutrin* as we said, had made an impression on him (2). True, Boileau is too austere a poet to admit the « pliability of grace ». This shortcoming he compensates by « good sense and propriety », the *Lutrin* (3) is replete with excellent poetry, wit, and satire, and Walpole remarks, with unquestionable satisfaction, that there « Boileau is certainly not obliged to the Ancients ».

Strangely enough, Walpole very seldom mentions Italian poetry, and when he does, it is in a most disparaging manner.

Dante is extravagant, absurd, disgusting, in short, « a Methodist parson in Bedlam (4) ». Tasso's stanza he does not like; nor does he care for his thousand puerilities (5), Ariosto is « an agreeable Amadis de Gaule in a bawdy house. » Petrarch's sonnets are « far-fetched, perfectly inharmonious, from being too crowded with elisions (6). »

1. *Lett.* March 8. 1765.— 2. « Boileau's Discord in a college of Monks », May 14. 1740.— 3. *Lett.*, XIII, 283. — 4. XIII, 186. « I do not admire Dante., if I could admire Dante ». — 5. *Ibid.*, XII, 274. — 6. *Ibid.* and. XV, 342.

Walpole's contempt for epic poetry, and his hard judgments on foreign poetry being, once for all, disposed of, it does not appear that he had any particular like or dislike for any other sort of poetry. It may only be noted that in one of his characteristic fits of false modesty, he speaks with disdain of Prologues and Epilogues to plays, a kind of writing he often cultivated. They are « difficult », he admits, but « useless (1). » Otherwise, Walpole is most eclectic in his taste; his opinions on individual poets help us to get a deeper insight into the psychology of the man, as well as a more definite appreciation of his poetical ideals.

Due allowance should be made for criticism like his, often written half jestingly, or provokingly, in letters sometimes sent to friends on the spur of the moment. But Walpole knew too well how ridiculous blind prejudice may be, to be tempted to indulge frequently and willingly in it. Does he not sneer at Johnson who (2) judged of harmony by the political principles of an author ? « No Jacobite could write bad verses, nor a Whig, good (3) », according to Johnson.

As may be guessed, his classical training left on his mind a fairly strong and lasting, but not altogether favourable impression. Besides Homer (4), Aristophanes and Lucian are the only ones among the Greeks who are granted a little notice and not a particularly pleasant one. They were, compared with moderns, the one a blackguard, the other a buffoon ; no doubt these writers also wanted « grace ».

Among the Latins, Vergil is the most frequently quoted.

274. — 1. *Lett.*, Jan. 21. 1787. — 2. *Lett.*, June 23. 1789. — 3. Cf. *Berry's Journal*, vol. I, p. 305. — 4. *Lett.*, 272, XII. « The inventor of epic poetry

« He accomplished but an insipid imitation of Homer (1) ». Æneas is « a nullity », « like Mellifont in Congreve's Comedy » ; some incidents as the episode of the Harpies and the Ships turned into nymphs are as silly as Mother Goose's tales. Walpole admits (2) that the poetic versification and language of the images of the *Æneid* are delightful, and that Vergil has, in the *Georgics* especially, (a poem with which Walpole shows more than ordinary acquaintance) (3) a graceful manner of thinking (4).

Beauty and refinement of expression being of capital importance in Walpole's eyes, are consequently the redeeming points in Vergil. Verbal felicity of expression is of paramount significance for Walpole.

He prefers Lucan to Vergil not only on account of the ideals he celebrated but because of the close-packed strength of some of « his hemistichs that go to one's soul and one's heart (5) ». Horace was looked upon as a pleasant companion with whom Walpole confessed he had passed « many agreeable hours (6) ». He relished his « wit and humour (7) ». Tibullus and Propertius with their pleasing manner and the purity of their style were also favourably noticed. With these exceptions the poetry of the Ancients did not excite much kindred feeling in him. Wit, humour and grace were Walpole's chief requisites ; he wanted these qualities to be handled with refinement and delicacy, and never « to fall into blackguardism or buffoonery. »

When applied to the moderns, his standard of appreciation was very much the same. The times which he sup-

and the only one who succeeded in it ». — 1. *Lett.*, XII, 273-274. — 2. *Lett.*, Decemb. 9. 1758. — 3. *Lett.*, vol. I, p. 45. — 4. *Lett.*, June 26. 1785, to Pinkerton. — 5. *Lett.* Dec. 9. 1758. — 6. *Lett.*, Nov. 9. 1735. — 7. *Lett.*, XIII, 282-283.

posed could not boast of any refinement undergo scathing criticism from him. How superciliously he spurns « the muddy poetry of the three or four centuries that never had a poet (1) ».

Consequently, Chaucer who, it seems, belongs to these unfortunate times is treated in a somewhat harsh and disparaging manner. The *Cantebury Tales* contain gold he admits, but it is a « lump of mineral » and Dryden's hand is wanted « to convert it into beautiful medals (2) ». To take an interest in Chaucer as he is, one must be, no doubt, one of those who have all their lives dealt in uncouth lore (3). Walpole was not much more lenient with the poets, who, when these awkward times were brought to a close, helped English poetry to get out of the rough track where it was weltering.

In more than one place Walpole (4) threw a handful of contemptuous epigrams at Sir Philip Sidney (5) and flatly denied that he deserved the praise bestowed upon him. That a poet whose sonnets are remarkable for a lingering charm, and the knightly terms, and chivalric allusions which he uses should have been so scornfully treated by Walpole, is at first striking and unexpected ; Walpole may have been prejudiced against the courtier, the flatterer, the chivalrous minded, whom he thought an affected, if dazzling puppet. Then, there are difficulties in his poetry, and Walpole did not care for difficult or « metaphysical » poets (6) ; still less for pedantic authors. He thought Sidney's attempts at writing English hexameters modelled, on

1. *Lett.*, April 18. 1778. — 2. *Lett.*, IX, 181. — 3. *Works*, IV, 232. — 4. In the *Catalogue* and then in the correspondence. — 5. Cf. Ernest Rhys, *Lyric Poetry*, London, 1913, p. 146-147. Hazlitt who provoked Lamb to incomparable retort about Sir Philip and more recently Addington Symonds attacked the man and also the poet. — 6. He hardly mentions

the metrical measures of the Ancients « a slavish and stupid imitation, and an injudicious pedantry (1) ». He criticized likewise Lord Brooke's use of choruses, after the manner of the Ancients in his tragedies (2) ; sir Thomas Wyatt (3) did not fare much better at the hands of Walpole. Sending (4) some of Wyatt's lines to Mrs Crewe, he says : « I think you will like the ease and frankness of the lines, though they are not poetic. » On Spenser, he is still more severe. Spenser is « John Bunyan in rhyme (5) ». Yet, though not overfond of Spenser, he knew his poetry pretty well and was aware that he could find there some « pictures » which he would be glad to study for the improvements of his house (6).

For, in his appreciation of Spenser's poetry as in everything else, he followed his own taste and his own inclination. To find a picture for a « bower », Horace then (VI, 198) says : « I am almost afraid I must go and read Spenser and wade though his allegories and drawling stanzas to get at a picture. » Walpole (6) considered him a true poet, who had been wrong in adopting his particular form of sonnet, and especially in wasting efforts on improving it. Walpole's favourite during this period (7) is undoubtedly Surrey. He not infrequently mentioned him in his correspondence (8), and read his poems, admitting that with Wyatt, Surrey had written (9) a small volume of « elegant and tender sonnets. » He elsewhere praised (10) « the elegance of his poems and (11) his improvement of English poetry. » Walpole does not allude to the sonnets of Shakespeare : his admiration of this author, whom he sets

any of them. — 1. *Catal. R. and N. A.*, I, 188-189. — 2. *Ibid.* — 3. Walpole was to print his life and letters later. — 4. *Lett.*, May 1775. — 5. *Lett.*, XII, 274. — 6. *Lett.*, XV, 343. — 7. 1744. — *Lett.*, II, p. 45. — 8. *Lett.*, X, p. 67. — 9. *Lett.*, X, p. 246. — 10 and 11. *R. and N. A.* I, p. 103.

above all, is wholly limited to his dramas. Next comes Milton, whom he considers as second to Shakespeare in genius only.

In this he was adopting a view of things which had become quite common by that time (circ. 1760). Milton and Shakespeare along with Locke and Dryden had their statues or portraits, in such places as Vauxhall (1). However, Walpole not only reveres but appreciates and knows him thoroughly. Milton is « the one great man on whom nor education, nor custom could impose their prejudices (2) ». Walpole praised in the most unreserved manner Milton's description of Paradise (3). It is not astonishing he thinks that « Milton should have had » his *Paradise Lost* read to him every year (4), and he adds that Johnson does not pay sufficient reverence to Milton (5). Walpole had been accustomed to hear West and Gray say that Milton « like Homer » was a sublime genius. He entertained the same view and noted with regret (6) that Milton was forced to wait for recognition, « till the world had done admiring Quarles ».

This usurpation of notoriety on the part of Quarles has struck Walpole. Comparing his own poetic powers with Gray's, Walpole contemptuously said about himself that « Milton and Quarles might as well be coupled together » (7) as Gray's name and his own, in an eulogistical account.

Any misuse of Milton's name and fame made Walpole impatient. As early as 1742 (8), indignant at the extravagant praises bestowed on Glover's *Leonidas*, he stated that there was no epic poem finer than Milton's, and, that

1. Cf. Moritz. *Travels in England*, in 1782, p. 34, édit. Cassel. — 2. Cf. *Anecdoctes of Painting*, édit. Dall., III, p. 72.— 3. *Essay on Gardening.*— 4. *Lett.*, VI, p. 103-107. — 5. *Lett.*, XI, 402.— 6. *Lett.*, IV, 88, Aug. 25. 1757. — 7. *Lett.*, IX, 293. — 8. *Lett.*, I, 312. Dec. 9. 1742; in a note.

this could be felt, especially at a time when « the wonderful seems worn out ». Indeed, the impression made on him was as lasting, as it was early. He sometimes incorporates reminiscences from him in his prose, and, just as he does for Shakespeare, Walpole fairly frequently quotes, or alludes, to Milton (1).

His admiration is such that it makes him conquer his natural dislike for the epic poem. « Milton had such superior merit (2), that if his angels, his Satan and his Adam have as much dignity as the Apollo Belvedere », his « Eve has all the delicacy and the graces of the Venus of Medici, as his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano », or again (3) he alludes to Milton's tenderness: « Graceful Leisure », Walpole reminded the reader of his *Essay on Gardening*,

« In trim gardens, took his pleasure » (4).

When grace was in question, his admiration, which was not by any means confined to Paradise Lost, could find no better compliment than to say of a garden, that it was « as trim as in Milton's *Allegro* (5) ». On account of this « grace », he is under the spell of Milton's descriptions. He declares them unrivalled. There is more « nature » in six lines of the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, than in all the laboured imitations of Milton (6).

Milton's tenderness, he says, in another of his youthful reminiscences, in his later days (7), « imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonas ». The *Allegro*, *Il Penseroso* and

1. *Toyn. Sup.*, I, 126. March 10. 1766. The members of the French Parliament compared to Milton's devils shrunk to Pigmies. *P. L.*, I, 777-781. Cf. also *Lett.*, XIII, 242, 244, 282. Quotations from *P. L.* in *Essay on Gardening* translated by the duc de Nivernais. — 2. *Lett.*, XIII, 282. June 26. 1786. — 3. *Ibid.* — 4. *H. Penseroso. Lett.*, I, 50 quoted, p. 70. *Essay on Gardening. Anecd.* P. Dall., III. — 5. *Lett.*, Octob. 1794. — 6. *Lett.*, Sept. 16, 1791. — 7. *Lett.*, XIII, 282.

Comus might be denoted as « the three Graces », along with the graceful, Walpole admired « the wonderful » and extravagant beauties (1) which, he saw in Milton, as well as in Shakespeare and which with unquestionable satisfaction, he looked upon as particularly English. The strong and impressive element in Milton's poetry he regarded with something like national pride.

The fine and awe-inspiring landscapes of the grounds at Stourhead and Hagley (2), two of the best samples of *English Gardening*, according to Walpole, are nowhere more aptly and prophetically described, than in some passages of *Paradise Lost* (3). These passages, moreover, bring out in strong relief the « respectable terror » with which (4) the poet guards the bounds of Paradise.

These « wonderful and extravagant beauties » which Walpole was pleased to look upon as national characteristics, he sadly missed in the literature of his own times, or even, in the poetical generation which immediately preceded his own. This period, however, had to a certain extent its redeeming features, and had paved the way to a revival of letters : with Dryden as a leader (5),

« The officious Muses came along. »

Walpole appreciated Dryden's Tales and Fables, as we know, and declared this poet to be « the standard of good sense, poetry and ease » (6). There were in his Works a fire and an impetuosity which made him enjoy his animated poety (7). « Nay, says he, it was but the other day, « that we were transported to hear Churchill rave, in num-

1. *Lett.*, IV, 201. March 18. 1765, to Elie de Beaumont. — 2. *Anecd. Paint.*, Dall., III, p. 73. — 3. Stourhead. *Lett.*, IV, 222. Hagley, *Lett.*, II, 228, 237, 245. — 4. *Lett.*, IV, 141. — 5. Scott's *Prose Works* (Dryden), vol. I, Paris, 1837). — 6. *Lett.*, Nov. 13, 1784. To Hannah More. — 7. *Lett.*, IV, 85.

« bers less chastised than Dryden's, but still like « Dryden's (1). » This poetical fire was not to be met with in any of Dryden's contemporaries though Cowley and others in his train, had « grace ».

Cowley « unfortunately » vitiated his poetry and his taste « by the pursuit of wit (2). » The more, the pity as « his mind was naturally graceful ». Waller, Prior, Gay and Garth were, from this point of view, far more satisfactory. The last three, Walpole once expressly said (3), were great poets.

« 'Tis Waller, who more than Surrey (4) redeemed the English language of his barbarity. » This defect makes itself too much felt in an author who was almost a contemporary, a man of infinite wit, (5), a good burlesque author (6) and one whom Walpole sometimes quotes (7). Butler's *Hudibras* is indeed much appreciated by Walpole, though his poetry is most uncouth and incorrect (8). With Waller and Prior, the case was different.

Waller (9) owed his reputation to the « graces of his manner (10) though he frequently stumbled and even fell flat » ; a few of his small pieces are « as graceful as possible ». He « excelled in painting Ladies in enamel ». The admiration which Walpole conceived for Prior was as early as it was lasting (11). Prior was a « favourite » of his,

1. *Lett.*, March. 8, 1765. Among the Shades of the great poets Homer, Pindar Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden is inclued in Walpole's epithaph on Gray, Septemb. 9, 1771. — 2. *Walpoliana*, I, 51. — 3. April 25, 1781. — 4. *Lett.*, XIII, p. 247. — 5. *Lett.*, IV, 282. *Butler's posthumous Works* has recently been dited by K. Thyer. When D. K. Nash (1725-1811) the topographer and historian of Worcestershire was engaged upon his edition of Hudibras 3 vol. quarto 1793. Walpole's advice (May, 1789. p. 30, vol. II. *Toyn Sup.*) was taken by Nash : notes were submitted and emendations accepted. *Ibid.* — 6. *Lett.*, VII, 207. — 7. *Lett.*, V. 387. — 8. *Lett.*, IV, 282 — 9. On the importance of Waller for the Classical School in England See : E. Legouis : Revue des Cours et Conférences, 7 mars 1912, p. 309. — 10. *Lett.* XIII, 282. — 11. His friend West who probably knew this admira-

though a Tory (1) ; and-although Walpole did not like Prior's friends,— the « elegance of Waller and Prior (2) », is a common phrase recurring often under Walpole's pen. Prior's *Solomon* and his *Alma* (3), he thought especially fine, easy and very well adapted to make ordinary minds understand the beauty of poetry. Two others of his qualities come near to Walpole's heart : he was « witty » and « genteel », principally in his *Turtle and Sparrow* and his *Apollo and Daphne* (4).

Among the minor poets of the age Garth also was much appreciated by Walpole who (5) ranks him among the poets he admires, considers the *Dispensary* « a very good poem (6) » and (7) frequently quotes from memory saying (8) to Mason that, with Gray and Prior, Garth is one of « the geniuses we have had ». With Addison, who « with infinite labour accomplished a few fine poems (9) », and who had a cold, well disciplined merit (10), we come to the close of the times which immediately preceed Walpole's. To Pope, Walpole was, on the whole, very favourable : His predecessor at Twickenham had been connected with so many things and people (with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, for instance) in whom they were both personally interested, that Walpole felt for Pope an unquestionable attraction.

Though, except at the last, Pope had been a strenuous adversary of Sir Robert, Horace Walpole forgave him, on account of his recantations and of his genius : Pope

tion, sent him in a letter, verses taken from a new edition of Prior c. f. The Cor. I, 252-253. — 1. *Lett.* X, p. 264. — 2. *Lett.*, X, p. 67. — 3. *Lett.* XIII, 216. — 4. XIV, 302. Pinkerton with whom Walpole corresponded on that subject did not seem particularly fond of Waller. — 5. *Lett.*, XIII, 261. — 6. *Lett.*, XIII, 257-258. — 7. Garth *Lett.*, March. 7, 1773. — 8. *Lett.*, XI, 402. — 9. *Lett.* V, 446. — 10. *Lett.* March. 8 th 1765.

« pleases » ; at least he should « please », because his English is rich (1), but (2), now, « 'tis an age most unpoetical », continues Walpole, characterising in this manner, his own time, and Pope has but « a dozen friends whom he has preserved from the taste of the last century ». Walpole may be reckoned as one of them, as he is never tired of quoting him, generally most aptly. « Pope and poetry are dead », Walpole exclaims in 1746 (3), remarking that there is no one to take the place of the poet.

To cultivate polish and correctness more than he did would be to overshoot the mark (4). His elegance is unimpeachable. The *Rape of the Lock* is « along with the *Lutrin* and the *Dispensary* » a standard of elegance, not to be paralleled by antiquity (5). On this particular point of grace and elegance, Walpole is, however, such a nice and captious critic, that with great impartiality, he admits the *Dunciad* has « blemishes and though the fourth book has obscurities, it is to be (6) set above the three others ». It has descriptions not surpassed by « any poet that ever existed and which surely a writer merely ingenious, will never equal. The lines on Italy, on Venice, on Convents have all the grace for which I contend as distinct from poetry, though united with the most beautiful, and the *Rape of the Lock* beside the originality of great part of the invention, is a standard of graceful writing ». Does not Walpole here forestall and answer the question so much vexed afterwards, in the next century : was Pope a

1. *Lett.*, Feb. 5, 1781. — 2. *Lett.*, May 4, 1742. — 3. *Lett.*, May 21 rst. 1746. — 4. *Lett.*, 18. Feb, 1776. Lord Melcombe has written an Epistle so civil, so harmless, so harmonious, that it is the Ghost of one of Pope's tunes. — 5. *Lett.*, XIII, 283. — 6. *Ibid.* The *Dunciad* is blemished by the offensive images of the games.

poet (1) ? « Dryden was a poet by nature, Walpole said elsewhere (2); Pope by art »... « Dryden's thoughts, though expressed in common words, fell into music. Pope was forced to use transposition and less common words to prevent his thoughts from appearing in prose ». He does not look upon Pope with his « correct and sober march (3) » and his « rather tame fire, (4) » as capable of writing a Saint Cecilian Ode. He held the reins of Pegasus with a hand too tight and cautious « for that ».

Among the poets of his own time Walpole heartily despised « those tame geniuses (5) », Glover, Akenside and Thomson. It is true, that in his rather hurried letter he does not distinguish between the dramatic and the descriptive poet in Thomson, and, it comes to us with something like a shock, to hear him speak so disparagingly and slightingly of the *Seasons* (6). Thomson and Akenside are poets such as an envious man like Voltaire will be pleased with, men mediocre in value, who, — Walpole imagines — the French author feels, cannot be set on a par with himself (7).

Shenstone is also a failure : « labouring as he did his whole life to write a song (8) », he « never succeeded »; he was a « watergruel bard » who never wrote anything good but his *Schoolmistress* (9).

It is evident that most of the contemporary poetry which then came to his knowledge did not please Walpole much. « In short, says he, we are at the height of extravagance and improvements, for we do improve rapidly in taste as well as in the former. I cannot say so much for our

1. Cf. Byron-Bowles controversy and : J. R. Lowell. *My study Windows*, London. Scott library, 50, p. 354. — 2. Berry's *Journal*, p. 63, vol. II. — 3. *Lett.*, March. 8, 1765. — 4. *Walpoliana*, I, 39.

5. Cf, *Lett.*, II, 248 and V, 136, about Glover's *Medea*. — 6. *Lett.*, March 9. 1775. — 7. *Lett.*, Octob. 8. 1776. — 8. *Walpoliana*, I, 39. — 9.

genius. Poetry is gone to bed or into our prose : we are like the Romans in that too. If we have the arts of the Antonines, we have the fustian also (1). »

However, Dyer, Young and Goldsmith have a passing tribute. Here, perhaps unconsciously, the romantic dispositions of Walpole's mind expressed themselves.

The *Spleen* of Matthew Green he thoroughly appreciated (2). He owns, he could never get through the *Ruins of Rome*, but he acknowledges that this poem « shows a great picturesque spirit » and that *Grongar Hill* is beautiful ».

For Young, Walpole shows an equal breadth of mind in the appreciation of the imaginative faculties. « I hold, he says, that even in his most frantic rhapsodies, there are innumerable fine things (3). At the end of his life, Walpole showed some regard for Crabbe's poetry : « pretty lines, easy verses and « one charming thought », are qualities he appreciates in the *Library*, but it is too long (4). There is merit also to be found in the *Village* ; « at least Mr Crabbe writes lines one can remember (5) ».

He also bestowed on one occasion (6) much heartfelt praise on Goldsmith, a poet of great merit, the correct author of the *Traveller*. This is the only place where he is really fair to Goldsmith « piddling Goldsmith », as he called him (7) whom however, with his common sense (8), his « bright gleam of parts, Walpole regarded as an interesting member of the republic of Parnassus » and who, sometimes, in *Retaliation* for instance (9), « could write with a sting ». At the end of the century Dr Darwin's poetry (10) « had destroyed his admiration for any

Lett., 1778, vol. X. — 1. *Lett.*, May 6, 1770 to Mann. — 2. *Lett.*, I p, 22-23. — 3. *Lett.*, IV, 73 1757. — 4. *Lett.*, XII 45. — 5. *Lett.*, XIII, 6. — 7. *Memoirs of George III*, vol. III, p. 119. — *Lett.*, VIII, 184. — 8. *Lett.*, VIII, 440. — *Lett.*, VIII, 269. — 9. *Lett.*, VIII, 440. — 10. *Lett.*, XV, 42-417. Twelve verses to be found in the *Triumph of Flora* are the

poetry but his own. Yet with his unquestionable classical orthodoxy, Walpole was very far from being indifferent to the literary innovations he witnessed around him. Gray, of course, came foremost in his opinion among contemporary English poets. The slowness of composition of his friend, he naturally much regretted (1), but in spite of Gray's scanty production, he ranked him among Milton, Dryden and Pope, the great masters of all ages (2). He did not wait to express his opinion : as soon as the year 1748 (3) he declared : « his writings are admirable ». Gray's *Bard*, the progress of the composition of which he closely followed, he thought inspiring (4), and he frequently quoted it (5). He considered the *Elegy* gloomy (6) and looked upon « the two odes » — The *Progress of Poesy* and the « Eton ode » — as Gray's master-pieces (7). Being anxious to show that he is « no enthusiast to Mr. Gray (8) », he admits that they may be obscure. This obscurity has unfortunately blinded Gray's contemporaries to their sublime beauties, which are equal to anything in any language (9). The « Eton ode » is perfect. Walpole considers it is a pity Gray had shackled himself with strophe, antistrophe, and epode in the *Bard*, and in the *Progress of Poesy* : yet he has acquitted himself nobly (10). Walpole could not help crying when reading « Fair is the morn ». His appreciation of Ballad Literature (11) and of Gray's poems bears testimony to his taste for imaginative and picturesque writing. His opinion of Gray's poetry

most sublime passage in any author, May 14, 1792. His admiration however strong admitted of some qualifications. — 1. *Lett.*, V, 56. *Lett.*, VII, 163. — 2. *Lett.*, XIII, 275. — 3. *Lett.*, 340, II. — 4. *Lett.*, II. 343. — 5. *Lett.*, II, 446. — 6. *Lett.*, XIII, 216. — 7. *Lett.*, IV, 85, 87, 88. — 8. IV. 87. — 9. *Lett.*, IV, 85-86. — 10. *Ibid.*, p. 87. — 11. C. f. his numerous allusions to Ballads in his correspondence « At present he said on receiving the book, I am immersed in Warton's *History of Poetry*, and can liste

might have been somewhat biassed by his personal feelings and the duties of friendship. But of two other innovators, in contemporary poetry, Macpherson with his « Ossian », and Chatterton with his forgeries, it seemed still more delicate for Walpole to speak with equanimity. Both of them were connected with too many angry and spiteful recollections. Gray was more or less responsible for the early enthusiasm Walpole felt for Ossian (1), in which are the most beautiful images (2); he admits indeed that for a time, at least, he implicitly believed in the authenticity of the poems, and he spoke of *Fingal* as an original composition (3). As to that « bold young man », Chatterton (4), the blacker Walpole makes his character, the more he extols « his astonishing genius (5) his miraculous talents, his noble flights and sweet strains » (6). But when he has perfunctorily proclaimed that « nobody can admire the poetry of the poems in question, more than I do », no more definite criticism is to be expected from him.

Such are the views which Walpole took of the principal representatives of the poetry of his own times. But his political, literary and social acquaintances brought to his passing notice a great many other poets. All his life, but especially during his early days in London, he paid close attention to the numerous political squibs in verse which frequently appeared then (7) and later, as soon as they came out, he forwarded them to Mann, Chute or Mason. Many pieces of poetry, now utterly forgotten, attracted his notice (8).

to no News. » — 1. April 4th 1760. Gray is charmed with specimens of Erse poetry. — 2. *Lett.*, V, p. 50. — 3. *Mem.*, *G. III*, vol. III, p. 120. — 4. *Lett.*, To Barret, May 23rd, 1778. — 5. *Lett.*, V, 249. — 6. *Lett.*, IV, 232. — 7. Especially after Sir Robert's fall and Pulteney's admission to the Peerage. — 8. Cf. *The New Epistle on History* by M. Hagley a fashionable

In the second half of the century, Walpole observed that patriotism was during that period an incentive to poetical production.

The imitations of Milton, Dryden, Garth « were always happy (1) ». Two poets, whose works have better withstood the gnawing teeth of time and oblivion, roused in him something like enthusiasm. The witty sparkle and considerable merit of Anstey's successful burlesque work, the *New Bath Guide*, were not lost upon Walpole. This writer, it is true, sank afterwards to no kind of merit at all (2), but *the New Bath Guide* is (3) as original a poem as *Hudibras* itself, all his eulogies are written in superlatives : easiest wit, most genuine humour, most inoffensive satire, happiest parodies, most unaffected poetry, most harmonious melody in every kind of metre (4). Of all these last details, to which a mere man of the world with no personal practice of poetry would most likely have paid no attention, Walpole took special notice : Anstey's *New Bath Guide* made a ready appeal to his turn of mind... First of all it was « a set of *letters* in verse, in all kinds of verses... and so much wit, so much humour, fun and poetry, so much originality never met together before ». This is quite in keeping with the fondness for burlesquing and parodying which was always strong in Walpole. It was not simply the compliment of one man of the

piece of poetry. The *Wreath of fashion* 1778 written by Tickell the son of Addison's fast friend and mourner. Another piece *The project* is also mentioned by him.

1. *Mem. George III,* vol. III, p. 119. — 2. When he wrote the *Patriot.* — 3. *Mem. George III,* vol. III, p. 119. — 4. *Lett.* VII, 78 so much wit, so much humour, fun, poetry, so much originality never met together before, possessor of a better ear than Dryden or Haendel etc., Walpole's love of burlesque and parody is gratified : Burlesque of Dryden' St Cœcilia's Ode, Moravian ode, Methodist Ditty. Enthusiastic was the first impression

world to another, but rather the praise bestowed by an aristocratic master of craft on another.

From this personal point of view, and also because we are made to realize what success that « great contemner of decency », Churchill (1), must really have met with in his own day, the sympathetic and enthusiastic way in which Walpole records these successes deserves to be mentioned. It also shows how permanent, in the eyes of Walpole, Dryden's influence was.

« A cruel and ill-natured satire (2) against actors handed him, (Churchill) to public regard, ... having caught the taste of the town he... started forth a giant in numbers approaching as nearly as possible to his model, Dryden ; flinging again on the neck of Pegasus the reins which Pope had held with so tight and cautious a hand. Imagination, harmony, wit, satire, strength, fire and sense, crowded on his compositions ». In spite of these remarkable gifts which enable him to add « grace to sense or beauty to nonsense, » Walpole thought he was careless of matter and of manner, and his raving numbers though like Dryden's (3), had too much uncorrected fancy. Therefore, in the opinion of a man who valued form very much, Churchill never achieved anything in proportion to the great powers (4) he possessed. Once only, one of Churchill's satires, the *Duellist* (5), showed what a great poet he might have been. It is the finest and the bitterest of his works. « The poetry is glorious (6), but facility of outrageous satire » does not make up for « his

it was also, as we see, from the *Memoirs*, permanent. — 1. *Mem. George III*, vol. I, p. 142. — 2. *The Rosciad*. — 3. *Lett.*, to Élie de Beaumont, VI, 205 and VII, 145. — 4. *Lett.*, IV, 145. — 5. *Mem. George III*, vol. I, p. 253, and vol. III, p. 118. — 6. *Lett.*, vol. V, p. 442. Somes lines on Lord Holland « are hemlock » ; charming abuse on that scurrilous mortal Bishop

composition wild and extravagant, executed on no plan and void of the least correction (1). »

This is quite in keeping with Walpole's favourite standard.

Politics, Walpole remarks, also inspired our poets and gave birth, in the burlesque style at least, to two poems of uncommon merit. One is *Rodonda* by Hugh Dalrymple in the style of *Hudibras*, the other *Patriotism* « in the graver march of the *Dispensary* ». Walpole makes much of *Patriotism*, a mock heroic poem by Richard Bentley (2). Like *Rodonda* this poem had « the misfortune of being written on transient follies » Though Walpole seems like some of his contemporaries to have had a higher opinion of Bentley than the writings of this author are capable of sustaining, Walpole was well aware of the deficiencies of his poetical friend : « full of negligences, crowded with intricate and sometimes far fetched metaphors », his style seemed to him, too much neglected. Another political poem is much praised in Walpole's correspondence ; it is Mason's *Heroic Epistle* to Sir William Chambers ; Walpole is « simply (3) going mad about it » ; it is not « unworthy of the *New Bath Guide* ». Such praises, however should be taken for what they are : polite praises — very often sincere — but friendly praises all the same, not to be reckoned even among gossiping criticism.

They nevertheless show the strong personal interest which Walpole took in the satirical poetry of some of his

Warburton. — 1. *Lett.*, IV, 145. — 2. *Mem. G. III*, III, p. 119. — 3. *Lett.* March 11. 1773. Walpole, it is true, may have been personally interested in the *Heroic Epistle* : cf. Thomas Warton's saying about it « Aye, Sir. Cut out by Walpole but buckram'd by Mason », reported in Cunningham's *Lives of Painters*, p. 346.

friends, Mason especially (1). The Whig tendencies of the latter, and his delight in English gardening, could not but please Walpole as long as they remained friends.

Such are, on the whole, the various poetical judgments, scattered throughout the works of Walpole.

They show first, his dislike of anything pompous or aiming at preposterous or ridiculous grandeur. His keen sense of ridicule is no doubt one of the reasons of his deep-rooted dislike for epic poetry as he saw it practised among the moderns, and in his own century especially.

Next, he is proud of the poetry of his country (2). He knew French poetry, no doubt, as well as any Englishman knew it then, if not better ; and though it may be regretted that he left out of account the poetry of the French Renascence, the somewhat unfavourable view he took of French lyrical or didactic poetry cannot be criticized. The fact that he set higher the poetry of his own country is quite natural, and it cannot be said that here his national pride got the better of his catholicity of taste or fairness of judgment. He does not fall into the error of that « old scorpion Voltaire », as Horace calls

1. Cf. Allan Cunningham. *The Lives of the most eminent British Painters*, London, 1830-1833, vol. IV, p. 346 about the *Heroic Epistle* as mentioned above etc. and « The School for Satire » : or a collection of modern satirical poems written during the present reign, London, 1801. Page 1 is to be found *An Heroic Epistle* to Sir William Chambers Knight, etc... The VI th poem contained in the book, p. 103, is The *Archæological Epistle* written also by Mason. Elsewhere, Correspondence of H. Walpole and William Mason, edited by J. Mitford, London, 2 vol., 1851, p. xxi. Preface : Mason and Walpole joined their forces in poetry and prose.

2. Any passage which could flatter his national pride was sure to meet with his enthusiastic approbation : He especially admired in the *Progress of Poesy* the passage where Queen Elizabeth « mumbles » the

his French Contemporary « who wanted to be taught awe of the English poets (1) ».

Among his fellow-countrymen, Shakespeare apart, the poets he preferred all belonged to the more refined periods. Milton, Dryden, Pope, Gray are the great masters he admires.

His catholicity of taste is not doubtful ; his liking for such poets as Butler, Garth and Anstey seems to point out a keen enjoyment of humorous and burlesque poetry.

But as may be seen from the many qualified statements made by Walpole, taste, and relish, and emotion, are not his only standards. He exercises his critical faculties fairly frequently and turns them to good account, paying close attention to all the requisites of good poetry. Fancy, freedom of invention, and imaginative powers, he duly appreciates, provided they do not go beyond the limits of undue license. Good form, sound workmanship, intelligent understanding of the possibilites of the subject, harmony of composition (2) and clearness (3), are of paramount importance to this gentlemanly critic.

It is worth noticing, however, that Walpole, gifted as he was with an unquestionable sense of the picturesque, and some imaginative and even emotional faculties (4), did not pay more attention to the rise of the Romantic school and the Renascence of Wonder, in the English poetry around him. His hard treatment of Thomson, and of Shenstone, his neglect of Collins and of the Wartons, to say nothing of such poets as Parnell, Hammond, and Somerville, is rather striking, and this neglect is all the

Polish ambassador. Cf. IV, 87 — 1. *Lett.*, IX, 419. — 2. Cf. his criticism of Gray's *Progress of Poesy* in the end, *Lett.*, IV, 87. — 3. Cf. his regret that Gray's poetry should not be clearer. *Lett.*, IV, 85-87. — 4. He says he cried when reading « Fair is the morn » in Gray's *Bard* line 71. Fair

more remarkable in view of his genuine and enthusiastic appreciation of Gray's poems.

This may nevertheless give the clue to the perfectly natural reasons of his attitude, so outwardly indifferent in some cases, to the novelties of the age. It is indeed tantalizing to hear Walpole tell us so that plainly he thought Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* (published in 1744) dull and uninteresting, while we are left in the dark as to what effect Thomas Warton's *Pleasures of Melancholy* had upon him. But we should remember that the first was a big book, which on coming out caused some stir, while the second, which, we are now pleased to look upon as so representative of the imaginative and melancholy tendencies of the times, was but a thin quarto of 24 (1) pages by an unknown author. This unobtrusive pamphlet might very well escape Walpole's notice. Gray's poems he had close at hand.

An almost equal neglect of romantic inspiration, is to be observed, in his own poetical writings, which, more or less in keeping with his critical views, seem to conform to the classical standard of Dryden and Pope, at least in outward aspect.

In fact, while the XVIII th century generally looked at itself with almost self-satisfied complacency (2), Walpole held a rather different view. He sneered more than once — but once especially — at « our Augustan age » as he calls it, speaking of his own period (3), where, look about him as he would, he could find hardly any trace of a Dryden or of a Pope, and very scanty achievements in

« laughs » the morn (*Lett.*, IV, 87). — 1. London, 1747. — 2. Cf. Lounsbury. *Shakespeare as a Dramatic artist*, New-York, 1903, chap. IX, p. 340. — 3. *Lett.*, VIII, 184.

poetry. In fact he was a nice critic, very hard to please, for he held poetry in high estimation.

Once he may have entertained views about becoming a poet himself. But though his attempts were not all of them failures, his own practice of poetry soon made him aware both of the great powers of mind, and of the mastery over technical difficulties which were indispensable to an author of the first order. He was soon disheartened, and before he was thirty, he found his own limitations.

The account of his poetical career, with its attempts, its failures, and its interesting performances, is shown by his poems which are their own commentary.

Here is, moreover the very modest and unobtrusive manner with which our gentlemanly poet introduces his own verses to the benevolent reader :

They are simply called verses, because their author pretends not to be a poet : and though rhymes that do not rise to the merit of poetry want their chief recommendation, and consequently are not worth being preserved, those given here are added only because many of them have appeared in print, and that the author cannot now deny what he has once avowed; but means as much to submit them to censure, as to receive any small degree of approbation to what may appear to deserve it. For any pieces that now appear for the first time, he judges them not himself; but gives them up to be condemned or tolerated as his readers shall think fit.

Hor. Walpole. *Works* IV. 373.
Written as an introduction to his *Miscellaneous Verses.*

III

THE POETRY OF HORACE WALPOLE

The table of contents of Walpole's poetry certainly looks imposing enough, but it must be owned that, in order to make it complete, a few unimportant pieces have been dragged in.

Of course many others have lost much of their point, and some of their grace is faded to day ; yet they are far from being worthless, and for the student concerned with Walpole and those surroundings among which he seemed to be quite at his ease, they have preserved an unquestionable value and much of their interest.

On the other hand, the tenuity of the important and interesting section should not be exaggerated ; tenuous enough it certainly is, but it shows that, with what remains, a case may well be made out for Horace Walpole as a poet. Poetry such as Walpole writes, is the poetry of a man who partakes of the pleasures of a certain set of the eighteenth century society, where, contrary to the more general custom, port wine, tobacco and packs of hounds play no part. Entertaining one's neighbours with cards and conversation over a cup of tea or coffee, with the reading of some play or some light society verses, were the main amusements resorted to. So far as Walpole was concerned, this community grew to be a sort of suburban society — not very large, fairly homo-

geneous, composed of well-to-do persons of rank — where fine dresses, fine manners, a superiority to sordid cares, a dislike of the obtrusion of serious ways in conversation, an affectation to be mainly concerned in trifles and gossiping trivialities were united with constant urbanity, chatter and light jest over one's private affairs.

An unpretending poetical gift was one of the many endowments which might help to make life pleasant and bring applause to Walpole. It was an interesting addition to the accomplishments of a gentleman. In a very unobtrusive way Walpole's poems are the commentary of some episodes of his rather uneventful existence. Though writing poems by fits and starts, he was in fact a practising poet all his life long. But his production was limited, for though he began very early to write verse, and the intervals of his poetical silence were not long, these intervals were extremely frequent.

In a life of many conflicting claims two distinctive periods may be traced in his poetical career. The first was a short one ; it was the period during which, with the enthusiasm of youth he (whatever he may have said afterwards to the contrary) probably took himself seriously and was pleased to think he might turn out to be a poet.

During this first stage, his friendship with West and Gray, no doubt helped to fire and keep up his enthusiasm.

His early ambition to become a real poet was the result of his classical training and juvenile enthusiasm for literature, supported by emulation. After he had written Latin verse, like most of his schoolfellows (1), Wal-

1. 1736, *Cambridge Gratulatio* and 1737, *Planetæ sunt habitabiles. The*

pole began his English poems by imitating Horace (1). But whatever may be the great hopes he entertains, he is modest enough ; so much so indeed, that his misgivings and his want of self-confidence provide him (2) with one of his earliest themes of inspiration.

With the stimulus of his friends' own efforts (3), Walpole makes poetry at this time one of his favourite amusements. In the poem which begins with the words :

Seeds of poetry and rhime (*sic*)

and which numbers nine stanzas, Walpole fancies that Nature wafts about poetical eggs and seeds, and thence come poets when the « grain don't light upon a barren surface ». The end, which explains that

For one silkworm thought that thrives
Twenty more in embryo die,

is rather far-fetched, intricate and obscure. He is writing this piece at the moment of his life when inspired by the pastorals he reads,

Purling streams and cooling breezes

inevitably suggest « Treezes » for a rhyme ; he then wants to tell « his Myra », in an elegy, how cruel she is ; he says at the end,

Battles, sieges, men at arms
If heroic verse I am reading
I burn to write.

Cor, II, p. 138. Letters 35 and 57. — 1. *The Cor*, vol. I, p. 49-106, note 9. This imitation is not extant. — 2. Dec. 3. 1736. — 3. See Mitford. *Correspondence* of Gray and Mason, 1853. Preface, xxxi, vol. I. Mitford speaks of one of Gray's first pieces of poetry as being an answer in English verse to an Epistle from Mr. Walpole. Does this vague reference allude to the *Epistle to Ashton ?*

About that time and probably earlier (1) Walpole preserved in a letter a sentimental outpouring which aims at being pathetic and melancholy. It was suggested by the tragic death of two little boys who had been drowned in the river Cherwell. « The scene inspired me », says Walpole, who thought fit to terminate this sort of extempore elegy (written in heroic couplets) with a compliment to his correspondent, a cousin of the little victims.

Moved at our tears and moved to see no more
The hapless striplings sporting on his shore
The river God sunk his flag waving head
. . . . . till. . . here

He saw another Lyttelton appear;
No more a double loss he could bemoan
Finding the worth of two comprised in one.

This performance which may be the first one on record, is indeed one of the poorest of its kind.

During the same years, under the influence of the « happy hills and pleasing shade » (2) of Eton, under the more recent spell of the beauty of King's College Chapel at Cambridge he composes (3) *Verses in memory of King Henry VI*, a piece of some seventy one lines, written in the heroic couplet. Some sincere and heartfelt emotion breathes through this poem, which is also remarkable for a certain eloquence. It is the work of a young man already, steeped in classical and historic lore, who treading on the same sacred ground as Milton wants to show a feeling for art (Gothic art) and music, at least equal to that

1. *Lett.*, May 22nd, 1736 to G.Lyttelton. — 2. Cf. Gray's *Ode* on a distinct Prospect. — 3. Feb. 2. 1738. *Works* I. p. 1.

of the poet of *Il Penseroso* : « My eyes », he says, in vain require.

« Th'engraven brass or monumental spire »,

for a monument to King Henry's memory. But, is not the chapel itself, this « pensile quarry »... « shooting columns into Gothic state », a befitting monument ? and is it not especially so, when « harmony, your raptured soul inspires »? — when.

... « The tuneful organs blow
Awfully strong, elaborately slow and
... Raise meditation on the wings of love »?

The poem is so full of historical or classical allusions that, as will be the case for Gray's poetry later, notes are indispensable to make it thoroughly intelligible. Taken as a whole, it is the tribute of a good student of history who pays due respect to the founder of his college.

This piece which is one of the first written by Walpole, is composed in the stately — but rather delicate if lofty style — which he uses henceforth when writing heroic verse, or even when dealing with serious subjects. Here the reader has the impression that the author is riding on stilts. Moreover this poem contains many other characteristics of Walpole's mind and manner : a more or less conventional hatred of Papists and of « superstitious Papal gloom » a display of Whig spirit and principles and also of a somewhat emotional liking for Gothic architecture which it is certainly interesting to see manifested at such an early date. In this connection it is certainly worthy of mention that these verses, whatever their actual title may be and although professedly written in

praise of Henry VI, celebrate in particular the beauty of King's College Chapel.

But say, what shrine ? My eyes in (1) vain require,
Th'engraven brass and monumental spire.
Henry knows none of these — above! around!
Behold where e'er this pensile quarry's found,
Or swelling into vaulted roofs its weight,
Or shooting columns into Gothic state,
Where e'er this fane extends its lofty frame,
(2) Behold the monument to Henry's name!

When Henry bade this pompous temple rise,
Nor with presumption emulate the skies,
Art and Palladio had not reach'd the land,
Nor methodiz'd the Vandal builder's hand.
Wonders, unknown to rule, these piles disclose;
The walls, as if by inspiration, rose,
The edifice (3), continued by his care,
With equal pride had form'd the sumptuous square,
Had not th' assassin-disappointed part,
And stab'd the growing fabric in his heart.
More humble hands, but grateful to the mind,
That first the royal benefit design'd,
Renew the labour (4), reassume the stone,
And George's auspices the structure crown,
No lifeless pride the rising walls contain,
Neat without art, and regularly plain.

1. King Henry is buried obscurely at Windsor. — 2. This thought is copied from the inscription over Sir Christopher Wren, who is buried under the dome of Saint-Paul, of which he was the architect. — « Si quoeras monumentum, suspice ! ». — 3. The original plan is extant in the library of the College. — 4. The new building was raised at the expense of the college, and by contributions of the ministers, nobility and others- — disappointed part [of his design.]

What tho' with pomp unequal sinks the pile
Beneath the grandeur of the Gothic isle ;
What tho' the modern master's weaker hand
Unexecuted drops what Henry plann'd ;
This for the sons of men is an abode,
But that the temple of the living God !

At that time, as well as later, he did not lack a certain gift of poetical imagination and he enjoyed « visions ». Of this gift and of this visionary power we have a good many examples in his prose and we catch some glimpses of them in his poetry.

To Horace as a boy, were not « the playing fields at Eton food for all manners of flights? » « No old maid's gown, he went on, though it had been tormented into all the fashions from King James to King George ever underwent so many transformations as those poor plains have in my idea. At first I was contented with tending a visionary flock, and sighing some pastoral name to the echo of the cascade under the bridge... As I got further into Vergil and *Clelia* I found myself transported from Arcadia to the garden of Italy and saw Windsor Castle in no other view than the Capitoli immobile Saxsum » (1).

As a poet, Walpole went forth into the world with this display of a showy, superficial Eton scholarship. This was the best he could do to counteract the uncongenial surroundings he found at Cambridge. Men who plodded on to the honours of the Mathematical triposes and the Senate House, left the groves which witnessed the musings of Milton or, of Bacon, without one liberal idea or elegant image. They would, according to Walpole, carry into the World, minds stored only with scientific techni-

1. To. G. Montagu : May 6, 1736.

calities. They would go forth into society unmindful of these effusions which in the old courtly days the gentlemen of yore were accustomed to lay at the feet of their ladies. Verse and verse-writing were the necessary accompaniments of fine clothes, refined manners and a courtly dress of ceremony. Polite learning then was vindicated in the next piece in order of time — the *Epistle from Florence* to Thomas Ashton Esq. Tutor to the Earl of Plimouth (sic) which was written in 1740. Probably the publication of the work of a man, much older than he was in years, but for whom he entertained strong feelings of friendship, suggested, or at least occasioned, the composition of this piece. « Adopting Middleton's senti- « ments », the same ridicule, the same offences struck « him », that « provoked Middleton » (1).

This epistle which is written in the heroic couplet, is quite in keeping with the dogmatic, didactic and rhetorical poetry then in vogue. This long piece (2), which aims at satire and eloquence, carries us through the successive stages of its artificial transitions and well packed paragraphs, to the end of an argument which may be summed up in this : Ashton must teach his pupil in the right spirit of the Ancients, endeavouring to inculcate « love of freedom » as well as « sane philosophy » and admiration for the English Constitution to this young man who enjoys the intestimable privilege of being a true Briton. This epistle was a bold attempt towards serious poetry. Gray (3) says of it that it seemed to him « full of spi-

1. Cf. Middleton *Toyn. Sup.* I p. 4', nov. 22 nd 1741. Since Walpole's Epistle is set down as being written in 1740, Walpole must have known previous editions of letters. — 2. Cf. 2 No less than 376 lines. *The Beauties* number 142 lines. — 3. Gray to West July 16, 1740. *The Cor.*, vol. I 323 and II 89-92-93.

rit and thought and a good deal of poetic fire » ; it was, he told Walpole later « in the spirit of Dryden with his strength and often his versification, such as you have caught in those lines on the Royal Unction, on the Papal dominions and convents of both sexes. »

The whole piece is acrid in tone and is somewhat uncouth, an impression which our young poet probably did not mean to convey ; nevertheless it possesses, to some extent, at least, qualities of its own ; eloquence and strength, as Gray pointed out, in all sincerity.

When warring against pedants, Walpole was only expressing a state of mind which prevailed in his times. Sir William Temple had written an essay against pedants ; Swift and Pope with the *Battle of the Books* and the *Dunciad* had thrown all the strength of their sarcasm into the struggle against Philistines generally. It is quite intelligible that Walpole, who was a kind of polished Chevalier de Meré should have waged war against those people.

> See the pedantic teacher, winking, dull,
> The letter'd tyrant of a trembling school ;
> Teaching by force, and proving by a frown,
> His lifted fasces ram the lesson down.
>
> From tortur'd strains of eloquence, he draws
> Barbaric precepts and unmeaning laws,
> By his own sense would Tully's word expound,
> And a new Vandal tramples classic ground.

Although some of the paragraphs appear harsh, they are in reality merely strong, and it may be well to bear in mind the impression of eloquent strength when we come to consider their real value.

The following passage will bear comparison with the

best samples of « Whig panegyrical poetry (1) » on the same subject.

Britannia smiling, views her golden plains
From mitred bondage free, and papal chains.
Her jocund sons each unburthen'd day
Securely quiet, innocently gay :
Lords of themselves the happy rustics sing,
Each of his little tenement the king.
Twice did usurping Rome extend her hand,
To re-inslave the new deliver'd land,
Twice were her sable bands to battle warm'd :
With Peter's sword (2) and Michael's lance were sent,
And whate'er stores supply'd the Church's armament.
Twice did the gallant Albion race repel
The Jesuit legions to the gates of hell ;
Or whate'er angel, friend to Britain, took
Or William's or Eliza's guardian look.

It is well to remember the *Letter from Florence* when we come to study the *Mysterious Mother*. Moreover in these passages Walpole has shown that he possessedthe gift of characterisation to a pronounced degree. Speaking of Henry VIII, he says :

Not so the reveller profuse his (3) son,
His contrast course of tyranny begun ;
Robust of limb, and flush'd with florid grace,
Strength nerv'd his youth, and squar'd his jovial face.
To feats of arms and carpet-combats prone,
In either field the vig'rous monarch shone ;

1. By « Panegyrical poetry » should be understood poetry written in praise of England, of Whig principles and political liberty, and as a contrast, full off violent and sometimes harsh satire against other nations and Tory tendencies.

2. Addit et Herculeos Arcus hastamque Minervae, Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria Cœli. Sux. — 3. Henry VIII, Son of Henry VII.

Mark'd out for riot each luxurious day
In tournaments and banquet danc'd away.
But shift the scene, and view what slaughters stain
Each frantic period of his barb'rous reign :
A tyrant to the people whom he rul'd,
By ev'ry potentate he dealt with, fool'd ;
Sold by one (1) minister, to all unjust ;
Sway'd by each dictate of distemper's lust ;
Changing each worship that controul'd the bent
Of his adult'rous will, and lewd intent ;
Big in unwieldy majesty and pride,
And smear'd with queens' and martyrs' blood, he dy'd.

There are strong passages then, but too much of the filthy and the odious, in the piece, and too much unrestrained hatred. It is, however, interesting because, with its rude invective much more powerful than its panegyric, its strong abuse and its satirical vituperation, it is written in the traditional vein of the Whig poetry of the times. In some passages, it has the solemn moralizing tone of the classical school. In the opening lines, for instance :

When flourish'd with their state th' Athenian name,
And learning and politeness were the same,
Philosophy with gentle arts refin'd
The honest roughness of the unpractis'd mind :
She call'd the latent beams of nature forth,
Guided their art or and insur'd their worth.
She pois'd th'impetuous warrior's vengeful steel,
Mark'd true ambition from destructive zeal,
Pointed what lustre on that laurel blows,
Which virtue only on her sons bestows,

1. Cardinal Wolsey.

Hence clement Cimon of unspotted fame,
Hence Aristides' ever fav'rite name ;
Heroes, wko knew to wield the righteous spear,
And guard their native tow'rs from foreign fear ;
Or in firm bands of social peace to bind
Their country's good, and benefit mankind.
She trim'd (*sic*) the thoughtful statesman's nightly oil,
Confirmed his mind beneath an empire's toil,
Or with him to his silent villa stole,
Gilded his ev'ning hours, and harmoniz'd his soul.

Walpole never renewed this essay. With it begins, and ends his effort to become a real poet worth the name. The *Inscription* « for the neglected column in the Place of Saint Mark at Florence » also (1) composed at that time, is written in the same vein, for similar purposes, but it is, though an extremely short, a very scathing satire.

From 1747 onwards, Walpole wrote in verse, probably when he was tired of writing in prose ; nearly always he did so, from one or two impulses, either to give expression to personal moods, when excited by feelings of admiration, indignation, or amusement (2) or in order to perform some special social duty, generally to pay a compliment. Throughout his life, but during the second half of it especially, Walpole was much mixed up with the society of fashionable ladies, with whom he kept up a correspondence, more or less literary, as well as a frequent social intercourse.

1. Cf. Works I p. 17. — 2. Verse came naturally as a suitable form to his mind on some occasions. Cf. « Thou Senseless Hall » and *Lett.*, IV 89-IV. 253 (about the Fountain Tree) V. 295 In his Short Notes, he mentions XLI a burlesque poem the « Judgment of Solomon » : (1753) which he thought his best poem. Of this as well as of a poem on the « Destruction of the French Navy » written as an exercise for Lord Beauchamp (Short

Early enough however. Walpole assumed the character of the complete literary man he will have in the eyes of posterity ; his poetical status and affinities were, unfortunately no doubt, somewhat strictly limited and he was not so much a man who sings as a man who talks in verse. He was the fine gentleman who, presiding over the Strawberry circle sent an *Epistle to Mr Eckardt the painter ;* who making his frequent haunt of the play house, as men of fasthion do, wrote prologues and epilogues on some remarkable occasions, on the « Suppression of the Rebellion » for instance (1) ; who, now and then, for his own pleasure apparently, composed a fable (2) or a portrait (3) or an epigram. A man of the world, he kept a poetical intercourse with Ladies who themselves, like Lady Craven, or Lady Temple indited verse ; he is also a man who on the pressure of immediate feeling, such as indignation, is nothing loath to try his metrical skill in a great variety of verses and measures. Down to the close of his life he will write poetry every now and then with spontaneous fervour (4).

Though never avowedly a candidate for poetic honours, he reminded first his immediate surroundings, then the public and afterwards posterity (5) that H. Walpole the gentleman of so many and various callings and avocations, could also strike the tuneful lyre wherever he chose. This verse was not to be judged of course, in the light of that

notes XLV) no trace can be found in his printed works. — 1. Cf. *Works* I p. 25. Epilogue to Tamerlane etc... — 2. The funeral of the Lioness, The Magpie and her brood. *Works* IV. 371 and s. q. q. — 3. Portrait of Granville. *Works* I p. 31. — 4. *Lett.*, IV-113. — 5. We are of course begged to believe or suppose that [c. f. Short Notes XXXVII] the Poem of *the Beauties* was handed about till it got into print « very incorrectly » ; that Walpole sincerely thought (XIV p. 106) his *Epistle* the worst poem in the volume (Dodsley's). [He reprinted it however in his complete *Works*] ; that (*The Cor.* II p. 92) he had to be pressed by his friends, Gray in particular, to allow Dodsley to print it in the collection.

of a professional poet but was a performance which, coming as it did, to crown the other, deserved some attention. The « little societies » which he frequented, were such as he met at Mrs Vesey's for instance or « at a few other houses » and there, Walpole and another bluestocking, Mrs Carter, used to give « the ton ».

> There, Carter taught the female train
> The deeply wise are never, vain

These persons distinguished in general for their « ranks, talents or respectable character » met for the sole purpose of conversation.

> The men not bound by pedant rules.
> Nor ladies Précieuses Ridicules.
> For polished Walpole showed the way.
> How wits may be both learned and gay.

Was he not one of those « Learn'd Antiquaries. »

> Who from college,
> Reject the rust and bring the knowledge ?

and so, Miss Hannah More might give to would-be but apparently lukewarm worshippers at the Muses' shrine the following advice :

> Why quit the Muses' calmer field ?
> Taste thou the gentler joys they give,
> With Horace (1) and with Lelius live.

Walpole, it is true, by this time, hardly wrote any poetry worth the name : Now and then he broke into some little trifling song, (not so trifling he probably

1. Horace is H. Walpole, and Lelius Sir William Walter Pepys. See also R. Huchon : *Mrs Montagu*. 269. Circ.

thought in his heart of hearts, though even to himself he would not confess it) he hardly claimed any more to be even an amateur poet. This elegant display of variegated skill, up to the end of his life, is however an attitude quite characteristic of the man (1).

Polite literature, including poetry at least of the light and elegant kind, was then one of the playthings of Walpole. The example of Gray could not but stimulate, this tendency in him. Did not Walpole say of Gray that he « never wrote anything easily but things of humour » (2) ? Were not « his powers great in that walk (3) ? » Was he not going in 1750 to write a pretty and amusing piece, full of gentle humour called *the Long Story* ?

Walpole's friend knew well that light or humorous poetry had taken Horace's fancy, as, only a short time after the two young men had been reconciled in 1747, Gray, very likely, to make matters smoother and pleasanter, sent (4) enclosed in a letter the *Ode on the Death of a favourite Cat drowned in a tub of Gold Fishes*. The cat had come to her untimely end in Arlington Street, but later the bowl [of blue and white China] stood on a pedestal, in a small cloister at Strawberry Hill. On it was written the first stanza of the Ode :

> 'Twas on this lofty vase's side
> Where China's gayest art has dyed
> The azure flow'rs that blow... etc.

A tragedy enacted in Walpole's house, immortalized by Gray's verse ! Walpole was sure to enjoy being treat-

1. He even wrote at least one piece of poetry in French, which seems to have been received with but faint praise by Madame Du Deffand. Cf. *Lett.*, IX, 144. — 2. *Lett.* IX. 188. — 3. *Lett.* VIII. 372. — 4. On March 1 st. 1747.

ed with this delicacy. And later, how enthusiastic did he wax, when some fashionable anacreontics, written by Lord Middlesex upon a certain Sir Ballendine came in his way. Indeed it was the poetry of a noble Lord referring to another noble Lord :

« I have not seen anything so antique for ages, he says. It has [*Lett.* Vol. V, p. 52] all the fire, poetry and simplicity of Horace. »

> Ye sons of Bacchus, come and join
> In solemn dirge while tapers shine
> Around the grape enclosed shrine
> Of honest Harry Ballendine.

This disposition of mind tallied quite well with the manners of the times. Indeed, among Walpole's *Fugitive Pieces* the following especially must be judged in the spirit of the eighteenth century : *The Parish Register of Twickenham*, *The Funeral of the Lioness*, *A Card to Lady Blandford*, « *No rouge You wear* », *the Magpie and her brood* are the productions of a man of that age who had, in verse, some genius for persiflage, and some disposition for light satirical narrative, character sketch and epigrammatic sallies. The language is seldom devoid of wit ; grace and lightness of touch, it also possesses but this in a smaller degree and sometimes with sad shortcomings. In this poetry we also find flattery which is generally amusing because it is often playful and seldom kept within reasonable bounds. There are also verses to children.

It may be questioned how far Walpole was a child-lover. One of his Fables, the *Magpie*, and the « Verses to Miss Hotham » have a kind of wax or silk flower prettiness of that sort, which appeals to your fancy, as pretty

little knick-knacks are wont to charm the eye of a connaisseur.

But it is especially in so far as the man of the world is concerned that Walpole's poetry helps us to realize one of the aspects of the man. Walpole is represented (1) as « the last example of philosophers who like Saint-Evremond, Chaulieu united study with amusement, and sentiment with vivacity ; but in him, the levity of the French Epicureans was invigorated by the masculine strength of the British character ». Austin Dobson (2) has coined a picturesque phrase on purpose : he speaks of the « Court usher soul of Horace Walpole ». Walpole is also described by Hardinge as a man whose « effeminacy of manners » which had been very great during the first part of his life, was afterwards « lost in his wit, ingenuity and whimsical, but entertaining, fund of knowledge ». « Yet » continues Hardinge « though he was elegant and polished he was not, I think, well-bred in the best sense of that phrase : he demanded a full stretch of admiring hommage to his bons mots » (2). Walpole had, we are told, « infinitely too much wit ». His prose epigrams were « unremitted and left the hearer no resting place ». To conclude « Living Walpole had unexampled powers in wit ; of humour, he had no conception. » To the truth of many of the elements of this portrait, the poetry of the man bears sufficient testimony.

This poetry of a man of the world is seen at its best first in its connection with the fashionable festivities held at Strawberry and elsewhere, or in some other pieces written in praise of high-born but often rather faded beauties.

1. Cf. Wrangham quoted by Allibone, art. H. Walpole. — 2. Croker and Disraeli had already said something to the same effect. Comp. *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*. p. 30 London (Nelson) S. D.

After June 1747 (1) Walpole's poetry becomes more and more what it had hardly been, or only, partially, that is pretty, genteel poetry : the poetry of a man who has bought a « little plaything house », a little rural bijou with Dresden china cows, « the prettiest bauble you ever saw » set in « enamelled meadows with filigree hedges », where

> « A small Euphrates through the piece is roll'd
> And little finches wave their wings of gold !
> Where dowagers are as plenty as flounders (2) »

and where « While you write, » Pope's Ghost « skims under your window by a poetical moonlight ». « A tout Seigneur tout honneur », Strawberry Castle in its younger days was celebrated in verse and since then, was much associated with Walpole's poetry. Shortly after a great breakfast which Walpole had given in honour of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, and the Bedford Court, My Lord Bath who had been enticed there by My Lady Hervey's report of the place made two stanzas to the Old tune of Rowe's ballad on Dodington's « Mrs Strawbridge ».

> Some talk of Gunnersbury,
> For Sion some declare
> And some say that with Chiswich House
> No villa can compare etc.

This shows how very ready some of these great people were with their pens to improvise verse. But the poem was too short (3).

The owner of Strawberry Castle himself could not but

1. C. f. Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, VIII, 525.— 2. *Lett.*, Cf. Twickenham June 8. 1747, to Conway. — 3. To Conway, June 8, 1748.

follow suit and he added to the poem the next three Stanzas.

III

Though Surrey boasts its Oatlands,
And Clermonts' kept so Jim
And some prefer sweet Southcote's.
'Tis but a dainty whim ;
For ask the gallant Bristow (1),
Who does, in taste excel,
If Strawb'ry-hill, if Strawb'ry-hill
Don't bear away the bell ?

IV

Since Denham sung of Cooper's
There's scarce a hill around
But what in song or ditty
Is turn'd to fairy-ground —
Ah, peace be with their memories !
I wish them wondrous well ;
But Strawb'ry-hill, but Strawb'ry hill
Must bear away the bell.

IV

Great William (2) dwells at Windsor,
As Edward did of old,
And many a Gaul and many a Scot
Have found him full as bold.
On lofty hills like Windsor
Such heroes ought to dwell ;
Yet little folks like Strawb'ry-hill,
Like Strawb'ry-hill as well !

1. William Bristow, Esq, brother of the countess of Buckingham, friend of Lord Bath, and a great pretender to taste.— 2. William, duke of Cumberland.

Strawberry Castle will, in the course of time, assume a more serious aspect, the best verses with which the company shall be entertained must be what the author himself (May 17 th 1763) calls a « little gentillesse ». When Mme de Boufflers accompanied by several others came, « as the French ladies had never seen a printing house, I carried them, says, H. Walpole into mine : they found something ready set and desiring to see what it was, it proved as follows (1). »

For madame de Boufflers

The graceful fair, who loves to know,
Nor dreads the north's inclement snow ;
Who bids her polish'd accent wear
The British diction's harsher air :
Shall read her praise in every clime
Where types can speak or poets rhyme.

For madame Dusson

Feign not an ignorance of what I speak :
You could not miss my meaning were it great.
'Tis the same language Belgium utter'd first,
The same which from admiring Gallia burst.
True sentiment a like expression pours :
Each country says the same to eyes like yours.

We are glad to know this « little gentillesse » pleased and atoned for the « Popery » of his house, which, Popish as its Gothic aspect made it look, was not serious enough in its aspect for Madame de Boufflers.

1. Cf. *Lett.*, May 17. 1763 to G. Montagu.

About six years later, in May 1769 (1), on a certain day, when « all France » dined at Strawberry, — « all France » that is three or four French ladies and as many gentlemen, the Du Châtelets among them, — Horace this time again took the party to his printing house. This time again, verses had been prepared « with translations by M. de Lisle one of the company ; Madame Du Châtelet first, then Madame de Villegagnon, then Madame de Damas and Madame de la Vaupillière, could, each in her turn read the following lines, while « French horns and clarionets accompanied the compliment. »

To Madame Du Chatelet.

When beauteous Helen left her native air
Greece, for ten years in arms reclaimed the fair.
Th'enamoured boy withheld his lovely prize,
And staked his country's ruin against her eyes.
Your charms less baneful, not less strong appear,
We welcome any peace that keeps you here. (2)

Madame de la Villegagnon who apparently had met with some unpleasantness on her landing had no longer reason to complain of her misadventure since the outcome of it was the following lines.

To Madame de la Villegagnon,
on the seizure of her clothes by custom house officers.

Pardon, fair traveller, the troop.
That barr'd your wardrobes' way
Nor think your silks, your gown, your hoop,
Were objects of their prey.

1. *Lett.*, C. f. May 11. 1769, to George Montagu. — 2. Quoted as the following from *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors* etc. by the late Lord of Orford, enlarged and continued by Thomas Park F. S. E.- London, 1806. vol. IV, p. 376-377.

Ah who, when authoriz'd by law
To strip a form like yours
Would rest content with what he saw
And not exert his powers?

« Ah qu'en termes galants », not excluding a certain good natured boldness, these things were couched! Next, Madame de Damas' attempts to master the English language entitled her to share in the compliments awarded to Mesdames de Boufflers and de Forcalquier on this occasion.

To Madame de Damas learning English.

Though British accents your attention fire
You cannot learn so fast as we admire
Scholars like you but slowly can improve,
For who would teach you but the verb I love?

« De mieux en mieux » : at least this is simple enough close-packed and direct, but the next one which was intended for Madame de la Vaupillière is very strained and far fetched. It is interesting to note that here again Walpole's Muse resorts to historical allusions to impart piquancy to the piece.

To Madame de la Vaupillière.

Shall Britain sigh, when Zephir's softest care
Wafts to her shore the La Vaupillière?
Ah yes, descended from the British Throne,
She views a nymph she must not call her own
She sees how dear her Stuart's exile cost
By Clermont's Charms and Berwick's valour lost.

The Master of Strawberry could do no less than this himself in a residence where the « departure » of the company to whom he plays escort to his door, « was saluted by fifty nightingales who as tenants of the manor came to do honour to their Lord. »

Verse-writing, then, helped Walpole to shine still more in the social triumphs on which he greatly prided himself and was a pastime quite fitting with them. Even when a very old man, he still persevered. How gallantly and wittily can the Strawberry press « speak » when it addresses the Misses Berry.

When in 1788 « the Press » spoke for them this is what it told to Miss Mary and to Miss Agnes, winding up the whole piece by an amusing pun.

To Mary's lips has ancient Rome
Her purest language taught :
And from the modern city home
Agnes its pencil brought.
Rome's ancient Horace sweetly chants
Such maids with lyric fire ;
Albion's old Horace sings nor paints
He only can — admire.
Still would his press their fame record,
So amiable the pair is !
But, ah! how vain to think his word
Can add a straw to B —!

Such compliments were not paid in England only. Walpole would have thought it a pity not to show the French in their own country a sample of his Strawberry courtesy. When in Paris he could not help writing the following lines on « Madame de Forcalquier's speaking English » :

Soft sounds that steal from fair Forcalquier's lips,
Like bee that, murmuring, the jasmin sips !
Are these my native accents ? None so sweet,
So gracious, yet my ravish'd ears did meet
O ! power of beauty ! Thy enchanting look
Can melodize each note in Nature's book,
The roughest wrath of Russians, when they swear
Pronounc'd by thee, flows soft as Indian air ;
And dulcet breath, attemper'd by thine eyes
Gives British prose o'er Tuscan verse the prize (1).

Walpole simply revelled in such playful and worldly amusements.

How triumphantly pleased he was, when titled ladies to their great surprise, witnessed his printer drawing off copies of verses he had composed in their honour, « in the most faded style of old-fashioned gallantry », to use the words of Leslie Stephen. Walpole who, as his friends said, had he lived in the « Third Richard's reign had been Lord Stewart or Lord Chamberlain », « was quite intoxicated » by his appointment as poet laureate on the occasion of a visit of the Princess Amelia to Stowe. Walpole had insisted on meeting her there, on July 7 th 1770. He could not help indulging « in meditations on so historic a spot » and these meditations were quite in keeping with the particular turn his artistic and literary preoccupations would generally take. « Every acre brings to one's mind some instance of the parts or pedantry, of the taste or want of taste, of the ambition or love of fame, or greatness or miscarriages of those that have inhabited, decorated, planned or visited the place. Pope, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Kent, Gibbs, Lord Cobham, Lord Chesterfield... « Leo-

1. To Lady Hervey. *Lett.* Jan. 11.1766

nidas Glover »... all these images crowded upon one's memory and added visionary personages to the charming scenes. »

Walpole's poetry was the very kind which found suitable surroundings in a place like this (1) celebrated by so many epitaphs, dedications in verse and poem of all sorts.

There was in the park a secluded spot where the Princess when she came there, « really was in Elysium ». An arch and other heathen temples had been erected, and the statues of Apollo and the Muses stood on each side.

One day, this is what she found :

T'other day, with a beautiful frown on her brow,
To the rest of the gods said the Venus of Stow,
What a fuss is here made with that arch just erected !
How our temples are slighted, our altars neglected !
Since your nymph has appear'd, we are noticed no more,
All resort to her shrine, all her presence adore ;
And what's more provoking, before all our faces,
Temple thither has drawn both the Muses and Graces !
Keep your temper, dear child : Phœbus cried with a smile,
Nor this happy, this amiable festival spoil.
Can your shrine any longer with garlands be drest ?
When a true goddess reigns, all the false are suppress !

Originally, the poet tells G. Montagu, the two last lines were much better, reading as follows.

« Recollect once before that our oracle ceased,
When a real divinity rose in the East ».

1. Cf. Stowe. *A description of the magnificent house and gardens of the Right honourable Richard Greville Temple*, London, 1773.

So many heathen temples around him made Walpole talk as a Roman poet would have done : what a pity he should have had to alter his lines out of decorum !

About that time (1770) he was quite the lady's man to whom we have already alluded. When a club of both sexes was to be erected at Almack's on « the model of that of the men of White's », and Mrs Fitzeroy, Lady Pembroke, Mrs Meynell, Lady Molyneux, Miss Pelham and Miss Lloyd were among the members, Walpole was ashamed to say « he was of so young and fashionable a society » because ; they were « people he lived with », (May 6th 1770) and he « chose to be idle rather than morose ». (*Ibid*) As however he had no thought of « passing a triste old age in turning the Psalms into Latin or English verse, he preferred writing verses to ladies. » For instance, when he saw the Duchess of Queensberry — « a goddess in Prior's days » (April 1771) still figuring in the world, he could not help adding some lines of his own to the compliment « which some fifty years ago » Prior had paid her.

Kitty, at heart's desire
Obtained the Chariot for a day, etc.

I gave her this stanza, says Walpole :

To many a Kitty, Love his car
Will for a day engage
But Prior's Kitty ever fair
Obtained it for an age !

April 26 1771.

All these little conceits may sound somewhat affected but they were dainty in the eyes of his contemporaries, « Walpole had, even towards the end of his life (1) a great ele-

1. Cf. G. Hardinge to Walpole, April 20, 1770.

gance of manners that if possible added to the credit of his ingenuity » (1) (*Nichols'-Illustrations*, III, 177) and « the Muses and graces made part of his family ».

This may seem too flattering and hyperbolical a way of looking at the matter. Yet, it is true that, now and then Walpole's pen could write some really pretty lines, of which the Muses need not verily be ashamed.

One of the things which make the charm of the next little piece is that its character of a « royal grant » is well preserved throughout.

Countess Temple appointed Poet Laureate to the King of the Fairies

Written at the desire of Lady Suffolk, Jan. 3, 1773.

By these presents be it known
To all who bend before our throne,
Fays and fairies, elves and sprites,
Beauteous dames and gallant knights,
That we, Oberon the Grand,
Emperor of Fairy-land,
King of moonshine, prince of dreams,
Lord of Aganippe's streams,
Baron of the dimpled isles
That lie in pretty maiden's smiles,
Arch-treasurer of all the graces
Dispers'd through fifty lovely faces ;
Sovereign of the slipper's order,
With all the rites thereon that border,
Defender of Sylphic faith ;
Declare — and thus your monarch saith :
Whereas there is a noble dame,
Whom mortals Countess Temple name,

1. G. Hardinge to H. Walpole : May 10, 1776.

To whom ourself did erst impart
The choicest secrets of our art,
Taught her to tune th' harmonious line
To our own melody divine,
Taught her the graceful negligence,
Which, scorning art and veiling sense,
Achieves that conquest o'er the heart
Sense seldom gains, and never art ;
This lady, 'tis our royal will
Our laureate's vacant seat should fill ;
A chaplet of immortal bays
Shall crown her brows, and guard her lays ;
Of nectar-sack, an acorn cup
Be at her board each year fill'd up ;
And, as each quarter feast comes round
A silver-penny shall be found
Within the compass of her shoe —
And so we bid you all adieu.

Given at our palace of Cowslip-Castle, the shortest night of the year.

Oberon.

Miss Hawkins calls Oberon, our fashionable poet, to mind « with the tones of his voice » extremely pleasant and having a highly gentlemanly appearance. He was always dressed with extreme care, and, Miss Hawkins thought him « very much underdressed, if at any time except in mourning, he wore hemmed cambric ». His affectations were obvious. « He always entered a room with that style of affected delicacy which fashion had then made almost natural... feet on tip toe, as if afraid of a wet floor. » (1) Such was the man who acted as a poetical master of the revels and high steward to these amusements, in his own Strawberry and also as a Court poet in Lady Temple's kingdom.

1.

These were the times when he was seen in the act of sipping coffee at Lady Di (that is, Lady Diana Beauclerk whose drawings were « well known »), of « a Sunday evening (1) ». Along with « gaiety and old tales », « cards and mirth » (2), and among « the dowagers who roost » around him, poetry, in a rather small degree, but, in its own way all the same, helps Walpole to « while away the remainder of his life on the banks of the Thames (3) ».

The next pieces indeed, though written in the same vein as the former, are all more or less connected with Strawberry.

When we skim over these pages, though they are contained in portly imposing quartos, we watch the gay scene, the colour, the movement, the easy luxury, the superciliousness, the grand airs, the mincing and affected ways of all these people.

On the whole, these remarks refer to poems more or less connected with Strawberry and the Society there : that is the *Parish Register of Twickenham*, the *Entail*, or playful invitations to Strawberry or elsewhere, issued by its Lord. Many « petits vers galants faits par des fées (4) » may also be included.

Little bits of lightly touched descriptions, learned reminiscences furnished by the Muse of history, satirical hits at Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and all sorts of covert allusions, [some of which unfortunately require notes to be thoroughly understood and appreciated], these with many pictorial epithets and little affectations especially towards the end, help to make up the charm of this

1. G. Hardinge, May 20. 1776 — *Nichols's Illustrations*, VIII, p. 193. — 2. Cf. Allibone's *Dictionary*. — and. *Nichols's Illustrations*, vol. III, p. 213. — and. *Lett.*, April 15. 1768, to G. Montagu. — 4. *Lett.*, May 17. 63 and May 11. 1769, to G. Montagu.

Parish Register. The postscript with its fulsome compliments, real or feigned, to Mrs Damer has naturally none of the charm of the piece itself.

The Parish Register of Twickenham

Written about 1758.

Where silver Thames round Twit'nam meads
His winding current sweetly leads;
Twit'nam, the Muse's fav'rite seat,
Twit'nam, the Graces' lov'd retreat;
There polish'd Essex wont to sport,
The pride and victim of a court!
There Bacon tun'd the grateful lyre
To soothe Eliza's haughty ire;
— Ah! happy had no meaner strain
Than friendship's dash'd his mighty vein!
Twit'nam, where Hyde, majestic sage,
Retir'd from Folly's frantic stage,
While his vast soul was hung on tenters
To mend the world, and vex dissenters;
Twit'nam, where frolic Wharton revel'd,
Where Montague with locks dishevel'd
[Conflict of dirt and warmth divine]
Invok'd — and scandaliz'd the Nine;
Where Pope in moral music spoke
To th' anguish'd soul of Bolingbroke,
And whisper'd, how true genius errs,
Preferring joys that pow'r confers;
Bliss, never to great minds arising
From ruling worlds, but from despising;
Where Fielding met his bunter muse,
And, as they quaff'd the fiery juice,
Droll Nature stamp'd each lucky hit
With inimaginable wit;

Where Suffolk sought the peaceful scene,
Resigning Richmond to the Queen
And all the glory, all the teasing
Of pleasing one not worth the pleasing;
Where Fanny, ever-blooming fair,
Ejaculates the graceful pray'r,
And 'scap'd from sense, with nonsense smit,
For Whitefield's cant leaves Stanhope's Wit;
Amid this choir of sounding names
Of statesmen, bards, and beauteous dames,
Shall the last trifler of the throng
Enroll his own, such names among?
— Oh! no — Enough if I consign
To lasting types their notes divine;
Enough, if Strawberry's humble hill
The title-page of fame shall fill.

POSTSCRIPT

added 1784.

Here Genius in a later hour
Selected its sequester'd bow'r,
And threw around the verdant room
The blushing lilac's chill perfume;
So loose is flung each bold festoon;
Each bough so breathes the touch of noon;
The happy pencil so deceives,
That Flora, doubly jealous, cries,
The work's not mine — Yet trust these eyes,
'Tis my own Zephyr waves the leaves.

The *Entail* is one of the prettiest pieces ever penned by lively egotistical Horace. Though a fable, it is not written in the satirical vein of the *Funeral of the Lioness*, but on the contrary it is a dainty clever little thing, which may be set among the other pieces related to Twickenham.

The characterization of animals and the parts played by them are really amusing : for instance, the description of the animals endowed with human characteristics among them the caterpillar as a « subtle, slow, conveyancer »....
Here is the fable.

The Entail (1)

In a fair summer's radiant morn
A Butterfly, divinely born,
Whose lineage dated from the mud
Of Noah's or Deucalion's flood,
By various gust of odour drawn,
Long hov'ring round a perfum'd lawn,
At last establish'd his repose
On the rich bosom of a rose,
The palace pleas'd the lordly guest ;
What insect own'd a prouder nest ?
The dewy leaves luxurious shed
Their balmy essence o'er his head.
And with their silken tap'stry fold,
His limbs enthron'd on central gold.
He thinks the thorns embattled round
To guard his castle's lovely mound,
And all the bush's wide domain
Subservient to his fancied reign.

Such ample blessings swell'd the Fly !
Yet in his mind's capacious eye
He roll'd the change of mortal things,
The common fate of flies and kings,

1. This piece Walpole says was occasioned by the author being asked [after he had finished the little castle at Strawberry-Hill and adorned it with the portraits and arms of his ancestors], if he did not design to entail it on his family ?

With grief he saw how lands and honours
Are apt to slide to various owners ;
Where Mowbrays dwelt how grocers dwell,
And how cits buy what barons sell,
« Great Phœbus, patriarch of my line,
« Avert such shame from sons of thine !
« To them confirm these roofs » he said ;
And then he swore an oath so dread,
The stoutest wasp that wears a sword,
Had trembled to have heard the word !
« If law can rivet down entails,
« These manours ne'er shall pass to snails.
« I swear » — and then he smote his ermine —
« These tow'rs were never built for vermine .»

A Caterpillar grovel'd near,
A subtle, slow conveyancer,
Who summon'd, waddles with his quill
To draw the haughty insect's will.
None but his heirs must own the spot,
Begotten, or to be begot ;
Each leaf he binds, each bud he ties
To eggs of eggs of Butterflies.

When lo ! how Fortune loves to tease
Those who would dictate her decrees !
A wanton Boy was passing by ;
The wanton child beheld the fly,
And eager ran to seize the prey ;
But, too impetuous in his play,
Crush'd the proud tenant of an hour,
And swept away the Mansion-Flow'r.

The *Card to Lady Blandford* is a very pretty little jewel after all, full of a gentle and playful irony. There again,

Walpole's inspiration got its best chance, for the subject dealt with, was no less than Strawberry Castle itself whose « ancient ivy mantled appearance », « trophies of better days which adorn its walls », and the refined and generally titled (1) ladies (2), who were to be met there make up, with Strawberry itself the subject of this little poem.

A Card to Lady Blandford

Where silver Thames from Twitnam's emerald meads
To Teddington his winding current leads;
Where at an obelisk three highways meet,
There stands an ancient ivy-mantled seat,
Yet still less ancient than its ancient lord
[If Raftor, true, and Catherine Clive record]
With storied windowes is the mansion dight,
Shields, sabres, spears of Saxons, Goths and Gauls,
Trophies of better days, adorn the walls;
With many a portrait sav'd from time and flames,
Of sages, warriors, and their beauteous dames;
Fair dames, who govern'd those who govern'd all.
Within this castle's antiquated hall,
On Monday next, when Phœbus sinks beneath
The Western boundary of Hounslow-heath,
Will meet five matrons of unspotted fame,
Of gentle blood, and lovers of the game
Of cribbage. First, of hapless Monmouth's race,
Jane, aunt and daughter of Buccleugh his grace;
Next, Margaret, Northampton's high-born daughter:
Three victims then to hymeneal slaughter,
By prose-men widows hight: of these, the first,
In Ireland wedded, though in England nurst,

1. Or, to use Walpole's own phrases, « high born ». — 2. Among whom « Three victims to hymeneal slaughter. »

To Strafford's noble blood asserts her claim,
And drew from royal Anne her Christian name.
The fourth, twice clad in Hymen's saffron gown,
Whom men once Farmor call'd, and now call Browne.
The last, not least, but of the castle, niece,
And pleased her uncle and his guests to please,
Would feel her joys in number six complete,
If Lady Blandford would these ladies meet.

One day, with Garrick, Clive and her brother and the French mimic Le Texier, he arranges a party to which he invites Lady Cecilia Johnston and here again he seizes the opportunity of sending a few lines.

Our abdicated monarch, Lear,
And bonny Dame Cadwallader,
With a whole theatre in one from France,
And Raftor wont th' Eclipse in Hays (1) to dance,
Next Saturn's day, if fair or foul,
On bacon, ham, and chicken-fowl,
Intend with Horace — no great bard,
Nor one of Epicurus' herd —
To dine. Oh, would divine Cecilia deign,
With her brave warrior to augment the train,
From every castle famed in days of yore,
Of which, or poets or romances tell,
For wit and cheerfulness, and humour-store,
My Strawberry, my Strawberry, shall bear away the bell.

One of the last of these poetical invitations he sent on Nov. 28 th 1784. It is amusing to know what were Walpole's feelings when he did send « this sample of his idleness » to divert Lady Aylesbury and her « Academy of arts and sciences » for a minute in the evening : « It came into my head yesterday, » he says, « to send a card

1. Haymarket (?)

to Lady Lyttelton, to ask when she would be in town ; here it is in an « heroic epistle : »

From a castle as vast as the castles on signs, —
From a hill that all Africa's molehills outshines,
This epistle is sent to a cottage so small,
That the door cannot ope if you stand in the hall,
To a lady who would be fifteen, if her knight
And old swain were as young as Methusalem quite :
It comes to inquire not whether her eyes
Are as radiant as ever, but how many sighs
He must vent to the rocks and the echoes around
(Though nor echo nor rock in the parish is found),
Before she, obdurate, his passion will meet —
His passion to see her in Portugal Street ? —

« As the sixth line goes rather too near the core, do not give a copy of it : however, I should be sorry if it displeased ; though I do not believe it will, but be taken with good humour as it was meant. »

About this message, Miss Berry notes : — It was taken in perfect good humour ; and she (Lady Lyttelton) returned the following answer, which Mr. Walpole owned was better than his address :

Remember'd (tho' old) by a wit and a beau !
I shall fancy, ere long, I'm a Ninon l'Enclos.
I must feel impatient such kindness to meet,
And shall hasten my flight into Portugal Street.

« Ripley Cottage, (Nov. 28) ».

Two more poems connected with Walpole's private or social life at Strawberry may be quoted here. In a letter (1) addressed to Viscount Newnham, we are told about the

1. Nov. 6. 1773. No less could be expected from the master of Selima (the Cat that *was drowned in a tub of gold fishes*), of Tory (snatched away

dreadful sufferings and death of Rosette his little dog and are treated with her epitaph. « It has no merit, he says, to his correspondent, but in coming from the heart, if ever epitaph did and therefore, your dogmanity will not dislike it ».

Sweetest roses of the year
Strew around my Rose's bier.
Calmly may the dust repose
Of my pretty faithful Rose !

And if, yon cloud-topp'd hill behind,
This frame dissolved, this breath resign'd,
Some happier isle, some humbler heaven
Be to my trembling wishes given,
Admitted to that equal sky,
May sweet Rose bear me company !

Could burlesque be more amusingly blended with pathos ?

Some lines addressed to Lady Nuneham's gardener but, in fact to her, (1) are remarkable for their exquisite delicacy.

Your pinks, your tulips live an hour ;
A fortnight binds your utmost power.
Flora, the niggard goddess, pays
With short-liv'd joys the toil of days.
But, Walter Clark, your happy lot
Is fallen in a fairer spot :
A muse has deign'd to view your bower,
And stamp'd immortal every flower.
Her breath new perfumes can disclose.
Her touch improve the damask rose :
And ages hence the buds you raise
Shall bloom in Nuneham's living lays.

in the Alps), of Tonton, (Madame du Deffand's dog.).— 1. Aug. 17,1773.

The lilies of the field, that shone,
With brighter blaze than Solomon,
Shall beg to quit their rural stations,
And mix with Walter Clark's carnations.

Another example of this poetical intercourse may be given in reference to this subject : it was sent by Walpole to Lady Craven, another of the titled poetesses with whom he corresponded. This is what he says to Mason (1).

« I shall take the liberty (Sir Residentiary) to trespass on your decorum by sending you an impromptu I wrote yesterday, to pretty Lady Craven, who sent me an eclogue of her own, every stanza of which ended with January, and which she desired me not to criticize, as some of the rhymes were incorrect, a licence I adopted in my second line :

Though lame and old, I do not burn
With fretfulness to scare ye :
And charms and wit like yours would turn
To May my January.
The god who can inspire and heal
Sure breathed your lines, sweet Fairy,
For as I read, I feel, I feel,
I'm not quite January.

Probably you would have liked better to have the eclogue, but I had not leave to send it. »

Besides many such pretty little pieces, Walpole has also written poems of a more serious stamp.

Prologues and epilogues are a kind of poetry not to be despised so far as the XVIIIth century literature is concerned. Johnson's prologues for instance are well known.

1. Feb. 18, 1776.

Walpole's are totally neglected, and the general Public has no Walpolian sayings on its tongue as he has Johnsonian tags; yet with their epigrammatic turns and aphorisms Walpole's prologues might not unfavourably be compared with some of them.

Prologues, though chiefly formal things in those days could after all be made to answer their probable original purpose which was to propitiate the feelings of the audience. And the undercurrent of poetical turn of thought which was always strong enough in Walpole made him never miss an opportunity of exhibiting his poetical powers before the public at large. Here, although he may still allow a lax, feeble or cramped line to intrude into this passage, the gust of inspiration sustains him, and he manages well enough to make a case for himself.

With cunning he calls his favourite themes to the rescue: British love of freedom as exemplified by Shakespeare; disdain of French « rules », and of French critics; scorn for the tameness of French plays; hard and contemptuous treatment of crowned heads and assumed concern for the moral duty of the stage, a duty which the Greeks well knew how to fulfil:

« Not delicate while chastisement their aim. »

On the whole it seems that each prologue answers its purpose well: it is cunningly devised to propitiate the feelings of the audience.

The *Epilogue to Tamerlane* is supposed to be put on the lips of the Comic Muse. What would have happened, she asks with playful banter to the Britons in general and to the denizens of Covent Garden and Drury Lane in particular, had « Rome's young missionary spark »; (that is to say « the Pretender ») succeeded in his attempt? What would have become of the English Comic and Tragic

Muses ? Plays which had been spared by Critics, would be damned by Priests ; *Tamerlane* itself would not be saved. The whole poem ends with a conclusion full of public spirit, though mingled with too much flattery for the Royal family.

Epilogue to Tamerlane

On the suppression of the Rebellion. Spoken by Mrs Pritchard, in the Character of the Comic Muse. — November 4th, 1746.

Britons, once more in annual joy we meet
This genial night in freedom's fav'rite seat ;
And o'er the (1) two great empires still I reign
Of Covent-garden, and of Drury-lane.
But ah ! what clouds o'er our realms impended !
Our ruin artless prodigies portended,
Chains, real chains, our heroes had in view,
And scenes of mimic dungeons chang'd to true,
And equal fate the Stage and Britain dreaded,
Had Rome's young missionary spark succeeded.
But laws and liberties are trifling treasures ;
He threaten'd that grave property, your pleasures.

For me, an idle muse, I ne'er dissembled
My fears ; but e'en my tragic sister trembled,
O'er all her sons she cast her mournful eyes,
And heav'd her breast more than dramatic sighs :
To eyes well tutor'd in the trade of grief,
She rais'd a small and well-lac'd handkerchief ;
And then with decent pose and accent broke,
Her buskin'd progeny the dame bespoke :

1. The two great empires of the world I know
This of Peru and that of Mexico.
Indian Emperor.

« Ah ! sons (1) our dawn is over-cast, and all
Theatric glories nodding to their fall.
From foreign realms a bloody chief is come,
Big with the work of slav'ry and Rome.
A general ruin on his sword he wears.
Fatal alike to audience and to play'rs,
For ah ! my sons, what freedom for the stage,
When bigotry with sense shall battle wage?
When monkish laureates only wear the bays,
Inquisitors (2) lord chamberlains of plays ?
Plays shall be damn'd that 'scap'd the critic's rage,
For priests are still worse tyrants to the stage.
Cato, receiv'd by audiences so gracious.
Shall find ten Cæsars in one St Ignatius ;
And godlike Brutus here shall meet again
His evil genius in a Capuchin.
For heresy the fav'rites of the pit
Must burn, and excommunicated wit ;
And at one stake we shall behold expire
My Anna Bullen and the Spanish Fryar ».

Ev'n (3) Tamerlane, whose sainted name appears
Red-letter'd in the calendar of play'rs
Oft as these festal rites attend the morn
Of liberty restor'd, and William born...
But at that name what transports flood my eyes !
What golden vision's this I see arise !

1. The dawn is over-cast, the morning lours,
And heavily in clouds brings on the day
The great, th' important day, big with the fate of Cato and of Rome.

CATO

2. Cibber preside lord chancellor of plays.

POPE

3. *Tamerlane* is always acted on the 4th and 5th of November, the anniversaries of King Willam's birth and landing.

What (1) youth is he with comelies conquest crown'd,
His warlike brow with full-blown laurels bound?
What wreaths are these that Vict'ry dare to join,
And blend with trophies of my fav'rite Boyne?
Oh! if the Muse can happy aught presage,
Of new deliv'rance to the state and stage ;
Is not untaught the characters to spell
Of all who bravely fight or conquer well ;
Thou (2) shalt be Williamlike the last design'd
The tyrant's scourge, and blessing of mankind ;
Born, civil tumult and blind zeal to quell,
That teaches happy subjects to rebel.
Nassau himself but half our vows shall share,
Divide our incense and divide our pray'r ;
And oft as Tamerlane shall lend his name
To shadow his, thy rival star shall claim
Th'ambiguous laurel (3) and the doubtful name.

If in purpose and character, prologues are actually what we stated them to be, the *Prologue* to the *Mysterious Mother* is well in perfect harmony with the spirit and the manner of this sort of composition. That is to say, Walpole strikes a just means between respectfulness and authority for the judicial rights of the audience to appreciate the pleasures offered to them according to their likes and dislikes, and the authority of the poet who tries to strike new paths of thought. Indeed Walpole claims, not without skill and adroitness, the liberality of the audience as a redress for the prejudices which the apparently disgusting subject he had selected might have fostered against it :

1. William, duke of Cumberland. — 2. *Tu Marcellus eris.*
VIRGILE
3. Conditor Hiados cantabitur, atque Maronis Altisoni dubiam scientia carmina palmam.

PROLOGUE TO THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER

From no French model breathes the muse to-night;
The scene she draws is horrid, not polite.
She dips her pen in terror. Will ye shrink?
Shall foreign critics teach you how to think?
Had Shakespear's magic dignified the stage,
If timid laws had school'd th' insipid age?
Had Hamlet's spectre trod the midnight round?
Or Banquo's issue been in vision crown'd?
Free as your country, Britons, be your scene!
Be Nature now, and now Invention, Queen!
Be Vice alone corrected and restrain'd.
Can crimes be punish'd by a bard enchain'd?
And told: This is not nice; That is not rule?
The French no crimes of magnitude admit;
They seldom startle, just alarm the pit.
At most, when dire necessity ordains,
That death should sluice some king's or lover's veins,
A tedious confident appears, to tell
What dismal woes behind the scenes befell.
Chill'd with the drowsy tale, his audience fret,
While the starv'd piece concludes like a gazette.

The tragic Greeks with nobler licence wrote;
Nor veil'd the eye, but pluck'd away the mote.
Whatever passion prompted, was their game;
Not delicate, while chastisement their aim.
Electra now a parent's blood demands;
Now parricide distains the Theban's hands,
And love incestuous knots his nuptial bands.
Such is our scene; from real life it rose;
Tremendous picture of domestic woes.
If terror shake you, or soft pity move,

If dreadful pangs o'ertake unbridled love ;
Excuse the bard, who from your feelings draws
All the reward he aims at, your applause.

The tendency of making up to the audience by flattering its prejudices, especially against the French (1) or Frenchified wits, is still apparent in the *Epilogue to Braganza* (2). Here, assuming the character of a gallant knight, Walpole takes the part of women, contending (and who among this fair audience could be boorish enough not to agree with him ?) that it is « injurious slander to « say women are playthings for our idle hours ». Here, once more, Walpole shows himself in his well-known « rôle », as an XVIII^th century champion of the fair sex :

Is it permitted, in this age severe,
For female softness to demand a tear ?
Is it allowed, in such censorious days,
For female virtue to solicit praise ?
Dares manly sense, beneath a tender form,
Presume to dictate, and aspire to warn ?
May so unnatural a being venture
As a true heroine on the stage to enter ?
No, says a wit, made up of French grimaces,
Yet self-ordain'd the high-priest of the Graces :
Women are playthings for our idle hours,
Their souls unfinish'd, and confin'd their sorrow's ;
Loquacious, vain, by slight attentions won,
By flattery gain'd, and by untruths undone,
Or should some grave great plan engage their minds,
The first caprice can give it to the winds ;
And the chief statewoman of all the sex
Grows nervous, if a fop or pimple vex.

1. Cf. S. Johnson's satire *London*. — 2. A play written by Jephson : the epilogue was written in Feb. 1755.

In spite of this more or less genuine flattery, there is a strong mixture of satire and irony in the Prologues and Epilogues ; how great was the extent of Walpole's gifts and powers in that line, may be judged from one of the few fables he has written, the *Funeral of the Lioness*.

From the impression made by this satirical fable it seemed that so far as Walpole's verse writing was concerned he had a very tolerable instrument in suitable order ready to his hand.

Here is an example of irony, a skit at the Doctors of the times.

> « Who know exact what passions move
> The breast supreme of angry Jove ».

And the short compact speech of the Lion King is written with verve and point.

In the *Funeral of the Lioness* Walpole unites two of La Fontaine's fables : « Les Funérailles de la Lionne » and, « Les Animaux Malades de la Peste » (the Plague-stricken Animals). Gray has been rightly congratulated for having introduced English names into the *Elegy*. The same compliment, — *Mutatis mutandis* and with all due respect paid to Gray's *Elegy* — might be paid to Walpole. In this Fable, for instance Clark and Newton are playfully shown in Elysium sitting by the side of the Lioness Queen. And some lines higher up a certain Delawar had been mentioned by Walpole as a type of flatterer.

There is a definite satirical and caustic wit throughout the piece not seldom remarkable for a certain grimness.

> The Thund'rer dipped his lightnings keen
> In vials of small pox and spleen.

Light banter also, is united to grim irony in the passages where we are told, how wrong and stupid it was of the stag to weep for the loss of his wife (devoured by the lioness) and not even to groan, when he heard of the Queen's death.

Walpole, we know professed to admire La Fontaine, and fable-writing suited his taste : not that the moralizing business of the fable had any special attractions for him ; but a fable is a short poem which may be made amusing and biting at times, by including satirical strokes, and La Fontaine had not seldom done so especially in pieces where he referred to Courts and Court manners. As Walpole was extremely fond of criticising what he liked or of evincing a liking for what he criticized, a fable of La Fontaine's like the Funeral of the Lioness offered him a ready model and he did not fail to use it. Without making any capital alterations to the subject, Walpole writes in a witty, amusing and pungent manner, with a good many satirical strokes. He did not like physicians and we know how he will allude to them.

The Funeral of the Lioness

The savage nation plung'd in crimes,
(As write the doctors of the times,
Who know exact what passions move
The breast supreme of angry Jove),
The Thund'rer dipp'd his lightnings keen
In vials of small-pox and spleen,
And slew their gracious tawny queen.
The widow'd monarch much was griev'd,
Yet compliments in form receiv'd ;
And to acquit at once his duty
To regal state and his dead beauty,

*

A solemn pomp of fun'ral rites
He orders, and his peers invites,
By sound of trump and heralds grave,
To meet at the cathedral-cave.

So, fond of pageantry and sights,
As his historic grandson writes,
Prussia's first monarch vented sorrow
In sighs to-day, in shew to-morrow.

Each shaggy baron with his dame
From distant wood and highland came ;
And much they gossip of the queen,
Of tickets, places, bombazeen ;
And much they press and crowd, to show
At once their dignity and woe.

Well — Of the foresters alone
The stag was never heard to groan :
And he had reason, some folks say ;
His wife and son had fall'n a prey
To her imperial highness' claws.
His wife and son ! — Was that a cause
To stagger his allegiance ? Then
Were royal appetite in vain :
And kings and queens of lion-blood
Might hunger for delicious food,
While subjects, calling life their own,
To grass and herbs would stint the throne.

A flatterer [good Delawar (*sic*),
Such, one has heard in Courts, there are]
Dropp'd somewhere near the monarch's ears,
That few had seen the stag in tears ;
Nay, that a smile, ill-stifled, own'd
He joy'd for what the public groan'd.

Boh! What, not sorrow for the queen!
Was ever such a traitor seen?
Call all my guards, my grenadiers,
Call my own regiment of bears!
He dies this hour, and piece-meal torn,
Shall teach rebellion how to mourn.

The stag who heard the thunder roll,
And death pronounc'd by royal growl,
With artful tale for grace implor'd;
Great sir, he added, prince ador'd,
Vain is the mockery of woe,
Nor what to saints and queens we owe,
Who, far remov'd from earthly cares,
Or know not, or deride our tears.
'Twas thus to my enraptur'd sight,
Her name and whiskers streaming light,
Like sainted Francis, late appear'd;
Your gracious spouse, our queen rever'd;
Her flapping tail and purr sedate
Bespoke her soul's Elysian state;
When thus she said: My friend, beware,
Lest what the King's connubial care
Of pomp intends, betray thy eye
To drop the tear, or breast to sigh;
While my ecstatic soul resign'd
From grosser cares of mortal kind,
Nor meditates the Lybian chace,
Nor mourns to leave my orphan race;
But, where Elysian waters glide,
With Clarke and Newton by my side,
Purrs o'er the metaphysic page,
Or ponders the prophetic rage
Of Merlin, who mysterious sings
Of men and lions, beasts and kings.

The crowd with shouts the welkin rent ;
The monarch lion growl'd content,
Stood on four tiptoes, grasp'd his sword,
Strutted, prepar'd to be ador'd,
And gave the stag to kiss, the paw
He fancied held the world in awe.

The moral of the fable saith,
Flatt'ry will please, where truth is death.

It seems a pity that Walpole should not have taken advantage of his natural bend towards satire, and should not have written more fables in the same spirit. But satire writing might eventually lead to danger and unpleasantness, and an Epicure's life must be free from trouble.

A man of many discursive interests, Walpole preferred attempting portrait-writing, which afforded him an opportunity of sprinkling his pieces with a dash of satire or even of polite savagery if he was inclined to do so.

Walpole was a good portrait-painter in prose : for instance, one of his letters addressed to Gray (1) is full of portraits. He praised Madame Geoffrin's pencil that never failed in a likeness. He had such a pencil both in prose and in poetry. Of the two portraits Walpole wrote in poetry one is that of Madame du Deffand ; the other, the portrait of John, Earl of Granville, shows that our author never gets rid of his caustic, ironical and sceptical spirit. Though conscious of Granville's « beauty » of his charms and of his intellectual gifts, Granville's strong taste for the bottle is a weakness on which Walpole does not fail to lay a stress.

1. June. 25 th, 1766. One instance among many other such letters.

Commanding beauty, smooth'd by cheerful grace,
Sat on each open feature of his face,
Bold was his language, rapid, glowing, strong :
And science flow'd spontaneous from his tongue,
A genius seizing systems, slighting rules ;
And void of gall, with boundless scorn of fools,
Ambition dealt her flambeau to his hands,
And Bacchus sprinkled fuel on the brand,
His wish to counsel monarchs, or controls ;
His means th' impetuous ardour of his soul ;
For while his views out stretch'd a mortal's span
Nor prudence drew, nor craft pursued the plan.

Swift fell the scaffold of his airy pride,
But, slightly built, diffus'd no ruin wide,
Unhurt, undaunted, undisturb'd he fell :
Bold, laugh the same, and the same stories tell ;
And more a sage than he, who bade await
His revels, till his conquests (1) were complete,
Our jovial statesman either sail unfurl'd
And drank his bottle, tho' he miss'd the world.

In the survey of Walpole's poems in which he painted portraits, the *Beauties* belongs to the fashionable set we are examining. This poem brings out one of the prime sources of his poetical inspiration. One of these was, no doubt, the wish to celebrate in his verse the bevy of fine ladies who, along with their relations, had been leading figures in the polite and political circles of that time. The portraiture of all these gentlewomen is elegant, refined, sometines full of exquisite point and intellectual subtlety, but, not very characteristic. Yet, this galaxy of portrayed feminine beauty was quite in keeping with his love of beautiful things, in which he simply revelled,

1. Pyrrlus.

with what one might call a Virtuoso and Dilettante's fond sensuality and even voluptuousness.

The piece is intended to be a graceful and ingenuous set of verses. In fact, it is, in some places.

In writing the *Beauties*, an Epistle to J. Eckhartd the painter, Walpole was not only assuming a pleasant and patronizing attitude, he also followed as he had done in his *Epistle* from Florence, some sort of tradition. Two of his favourite poets Waller and Denham wrote poems about painting (1). « In Nichols's » Illustrations of Literature we find a paper (2) on the *Beauties*, « a favourite poem of Horace Walpole » (3).

« All people give it, says the author, comparing it with similar pieces, to Horry Walpole, and some like it. But surely it wants the terseness and the elegance of these effusions. Nor is the want of them redeemed by powerful strokes of invention. Nor can I allow the improper and ungraceful use of many words or the negligence of construction. Yet *we all agree it is worth reading and I sent it accordingly.* » There are indeed some interesting, easy flowing passages. Others in which Walpole shows himself a good craftsman in porcelain work and calls up to mind with his little miniatures the age of curls, patches, hoops and brocade. Addressing Eckhardt the painter, he says.

> Nor mind whatever Pliny writ ;
> Félibien and Fresnoy disclaim,
> Who talk of Raphael's matchless fame,
> Or Titian's tints, Corregio's grace,
> And Carlo's each Madonna face

1. *The Tatler*, n° 3, April 16-1709.—Waller, *Instructions to a Painter and Advice to a Painter* and Denham, *Directions to a Painter.* — 2. I.99, by Daniel Wray Esq. « in an admirable *vein* of criticism ». — 3. It is followed y a neat satire upon it in a rich and pleasant rhyme.

As if no beauties now were made.
But Nature had forgot her trade.
'Twas beauty guided Raphael's line,
From heavenly women styl's divine.
They warm'd old Titian's fancy too
And what he could not taste he drew.
Think you devotion warm'd his breast,
When Carlo with such looks express'd
His Virgins, that her vot'ries feel
Emotions.....not, I'm sure, of zeal?

In Britain's isle observe the fair,
And curious choose your models there;
Such patterns as shall raise your name
To rival sweet Corregio's fame.
Each single piece shall be a test,
And Zeuxis' patch work but a jest;
Who ransack'd Greece, and cull'd the age
To bring one goddess on the stage.
On your each canvass we'll admire
The charms of the whole heav'nly choir.

How pretty Flora, wanton maid
By Zephyr woo'd in noon-tide shade,
With rosy hand coquetly throwing
Pansies beneath her sweet touch blowing;
How blithe she look'd, let (1) Fanny tell;
Let Zephyr own if half so well (2).

On the occasion of this poem, Horace wrote among others, one letter especially, parts of which, it may not be uninteresting to quote, as they show how he himself looked upon the matter. It was addressed to Henry Fox with whom he was then, as well as with his wife on friendly terms :

1. Miss Fanny Maccartny, married to Mr. Greville. — 2. Very elliptical ; here, of course, Walpole's grammar almost overrides the limits of poetical license : let Zephyr own if Flora looked half so well.

You frighten me out of my wits, which is indeed a fair step towards making me in earnest a poet, a title I should dread more than that of Patriot... I will be so honest as to own that the obliging things you say to me please me vastly. I find I have enough of the author in me to be extremely sensible to flattery, and were I far enough gone to publish a miscellany, there would certainly be one copy to my honoured friend Henry Fox « on his commending my verses ». But seriously, my dear Sir, you alarm me, with talking of making those I sent you public. I never thought poetry excusable but in the manner I sent you mine, just to divert anybody one loves for half an hour — and I know I must love anybody, to put myself so much in their power for their diversion. But to make anything one writes, especially poetry, public, is giving everybody leave, under one's own hand to call one fool. You think me modest, but all my modesty is pride ; while I am unknown, I am as great as my own imagination pleases to make me ; the instant I get into that dreadful Court of Requests you talk of, I am as silly a fellow as Thomson or Glover, — you even reduce me to plead that foolish excuse against being published, which authors make to excuse themselves when they have published, — that their compositions were made in a hurry or extempore. Rigby will assure you that what I sent you was literally wrote in less than three hours ; and, my dear Harry, I am not vain enough to think that I can write in three hours what would deserve to live three days. I will give you two more very material reasons for your suppressing my verses, and have done : one is, I don't care to make all the women in England my enemies, but sixteen, as their resentments would probably hurt me more than the gratitude of my goddesses would do me good, with all their charms ; and the other reason is, that the conclusion of the poem is more particular than I would choose publicly to subscribe to.

(June 24. 1746.)

Most of the feelings and thoughts Walpole expresses in his verse are equally delicate without being any more characteristic.

The three Vernons which is written in the same metre as the *Beauties* (iambic verse of four beats with initial truncation) is very much in the same style as this last piece of poetry. It has the same awkward and laboured appearance, united with prettily affected and playful airs and elegant compliments; but it is, like the other, full of circumstancial, precise, and, in spite of their hyperbolic turn, possibly true compliments.

The Three Vernons (1)

Henrietta's serious charms
Awe the breast her beauty warms,
See, she blushes ; Love presumes ;
See she frowns ; he drops his plumes.
Dancing, lighter o'er the ocean
Was not Cytherea's motion :
Speaking, Art repines to see
The triumph of Simplicity.

Lips that smile a thousand meanings,
Humid with Hyblan gleanings;
Eyes that glitter into wit;
Wanton mirth with fancy smit;
Arch naïveté, that wanders
In each dimpling cheek's meanders,
Shedding roses, shifting graces
Through a face that's twenty faces;
Sweet assemblage! All combine
In pretty playful Caroline.

1. Daughters of Sir Richard Vernon Esq.

As to young Elizabeth, she is « modest as the cloisterd fair ».

« For me » says the « Bard » in the concluding lines,

> Suffice in Ampthill's groves,
> Cradles of Graces and of Loves
> I first announced in artless page
> The glories of a rising age.

All these feelings are not those of a high-flown and emotional lyrical poet. To express them, courteous devotion to ladies and more or less Platonic admiration of the fair sex were quite sufficient incentives. As to love proper, though it would have been quite natural that a young man like Walpole should have had his thoughts turned towards love, the two juvenile pieces which he wrote on this subject, are most formal and conventional in character. « Plaintive turtle » (1) is but an imitation and « Love often in the comely mien », (2) but an Anacreontic display of verse, a copy of

Gay Anacreon's joy-inspiring line (3).

Two other pieces, « What a rout do you make for a single poor kiss » and « To Love (4) : the ideas suggested by the second sonnet of Petrarch » do not exhibit any sincere or convincing warmth of heart, while *The Advice* or « Love to Chloe » (5) is distinctly and scornfully Epicurean : Love, the author likes and approves of, but not if it is *the* « amorous transport », nor does he care for the « romantic ideas » often « annexed to Love by the fair sex ». The advice is : « only take care your heart, don't get into your head ». No flatter denial of sentimentalism in love can be imagined.

1. May 30. 1736. — 2. October 2. 1740. — 3. Cf. *Lines on the translation of Anacreon. Works.* IV, 404. — 4. *Ibid.*, *Works*, IV, 394. — 5. *Ibid.*,

Friendship does not provide Walpole with a theme of inspiration by itself, but it has suggested at least three or four poems : an inscription on Clive's urn erected to her memory in the shrubbery, the « Lines to Conway », the « Sonnet on Gray » and the « Portrait of Madame du Deffand » which flow to use Walpole's own words, from

« The richest stream that friendship knows » (1).

The spirit of friendship, though expressed only twice or three times in his poetry, is, like his Whig propensities, one of the great motives distinguishable in his verse. The piece entitled « Lines to Mr. Conway » was written with a moral object, for it extols fortitude of mind. It is a piece written with a lyric flow of a rather spontaneous character : Conway's will that bends but will not break ; his spirit and his valour, fiery though restrained by modesty and meekness of heart, all these things are expressed with a conspicuous undercurrent of chivalrous feeling, and friendship.

To Mr. Conway.

When Fontenoy's empurpl'd plain
Shall vanish from the historic page,
Thy youthful valour shall in vain
Have taught the Gaul to shun thy rage.
When hostile squadrons round thee stood
On Laffelt's unsuccesful field,
Thy captive sabre, drench'd in blood,
The vaunting victor's triumph seal'd.
Forgot be these ! Let Scotland, too,
Culloden from her annals tear
Lest Envy and her factious crew

g. *Works*, IV, 394. — 1. *Lines to Madame du Deffand. Works*, IV, 385.

Should sigh to meet thy laurels there.
When each fair deed is thus defac'd,
A thousand virtues, too, disguis'd,
Thy grateful country's voice shall haste
To censure worth so little priz'd.
Then, patient, let the thunder roll;
Pity the blind you cannot hate;
Nor, blessed with Aristides' soul
Repine at Aristides' fate.

Whatever Walpole may say in one of his disparaging fits of modesty, the piece which he dedicates to the memory of Gray is not unworthy of the poet. Stiff, elaborate and conventional it certainly is; dignity and solemnity, however, are not wholly absent, and some of Gray's characteristics are well seized upon. « These lines », Walpole says to Mason (1) alluding to their mutual friend, « are not worthy of him, nor do I repeat them to you but as a proof of my sorrow and a tribute to you : you will see that the lines suppose him buried among his real predecessors ».

Great shades of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, hear,
A genuine Bard from Genius claims a tear.
He, who in numbers, worthy of the Lyre,
Enshrin'd your names, now joins the mighty choir.
Amidst your radiant Urns his Urn enclose,
A spot more hallow'd than where Kings repose;
Aloft let Pomp her Edwards, Henrys, keep;
Near Homers's dust should Pindar's ashes sleep.

The tribute which Walpole (2) paid to Gray after his death was offered by him to M^me^ du Deffand during her life. The form is that of recurring interrogations, most-

1. *Lett.*, Sept. 9. 1771. — 2. In a heartfelt but not very felicitous poem.

ly the same all through the piece, appearing in different ways, and answered only at the end in four lines. The wording may not be quite appropriate; there may be too much of a mixture of smartness and prettiness in a subject which does not admit of either. The movement of the style may be stilted and awkward in places, but, on the whole, this piece of verse is an interesting, hearty (and in spite of its shortcomings), eloquent tribute to the qualities of Walpole's old friend.

PORTRAIT DE MADAME LA MARQUISE DU DEFFAND, 1766.

Where do wit and memory dwell?
Where is fancy's favourite cell?
Where does Judgement hold her court,
And dictate laws to mirth and Sport?
Where does Reason — not the dame
Who arrogates the sage's name,
And, proud of self-conferr'd degree,
Esteems herself Philosophy!
But the Reason that I mean,

Slave of Truth, and Passion's queen,
Who doubts, not dictates, seeks the best,
And to Presumption leaves the rest :
With whom resides the winning Fair ?
With Rousseau ? — No ; nor with Voltair ;
Nor where leaf-gold of eloquence,
Adorning less than veiling sense,
Dazzles the passions it can heat,
And makes them party to the cheat,
Where does Patience (tell who know)
Bear irremediable woe ;
And, though of life's best joy bereft,
Smile on the little portion left?

Lastly, tell where boundless flows
The richest Stream that friendship knows?
That neither laves the shores of Love.
Nor bathes the feet of Pride above;
But, rolling' twixt disparted coasts,
Impartial glides through rival hosts:
And, like St Charity, divides
To Gaul and Albion equal tides.

Together all these virtues dwell:
Saint-Joseph's convent is their cell:
Their sanctuary, Du Deffand's mind —
Censure, be dumb! she's old and blind.

Again, we must mention here another piece of poetry which is not exactly a portrait, but is also dictated by friendship and that love of polite learning and propriety which is so characteristic of Walpole. It is a sort of elegy written « to the Memory » of another good friend of his, Lady Hervey.

Charms that in youth attractive shone,
Glow'd ripe in their meridian sun,
And spite of ruthless winter's rage
Melted into becoming age.

Knowledge matured the fruit of Sense,
Nor shook the bloom of diffidence;
So silent and so modest too,
As tasting but what others knew.

Proud of humility the Sage
In thy unvarying temper's page
Or saw, or might have deigned to see
The Beauties of propriety.

Nor, while sustain'd each decent part
Could Prudence' self pervert thy heart;
Through life, to every friend the same
Each foe thy study to reclaim (1).

The last portrait to be included is a sort of portrait of our author. It is to be found in an epitaph which Walpole wrote for himself, and which sums up well enough his own attitude real or assumed towards life. The feeling of disappointment at « fortune who scattered her gifts out of season » is carefully hidden away by the well-bred, proud man, while the superior claims of prestige and high rank, though they seem to be despised are sufficiently emphasized.

EPITAPHIUM VIVI AUCTORIS. 1792.

An estate and an earldom at seventy-four!
Had I sought them or wish'd them, 'twould add one fear more,
That of making a countess when almost four score.
But Fortune, who scatters her gifts out of season,
Though unkind to my limbs, has still left me my reason ;
And whether she lowers or lifts me, I'll try,
In the plain simple style I have liv'd in, to die :
For ambition too humble, for meanness too high.

These are interesting exceptions ; for the rest, if any intense glow of enthusiasm is to be found in Walpole's poetry, it is not stirred by deep emotions or passions of the heart. It is excited, by passions of the intellect : love of liberty, love of country in the form of a rather narrow minded and self satisfied pride in his own land, love of « polite learning »

1. *Toynbee Sup.*, vol. I., p. 180-181.

and philosophy and last of all, that love of beauty and art, we saw expressed in the *Beauties*.

In those days there was also a conventional love of « Greek or Roman virtue », which naturally fostered by classical training had found its most brilliant expression in Addison's *Cato*. This « Roman virtue » could not but leave its mark on Walpole, and more than once he has extolled Cimon, Aristides and the « virtuous heroes » who, conforming to Spartan precepts knew « to wield the righteous spear (1)... » And it is the example of Aristides that he proposes to Conway (2) to strengthen his fortitude of mind. Moral advice to an audience (3) was also freely imparted by Walpole on the stage.

The love of liberty which he expresses is undoubtedly sincere, but it is not original. It is on the contrary largely imitative. Throughout the century it was one of the common-places of poetry. Everybody agreed, that only the true Briton knew what liberty was, and could taste her blessings.

First and foremost, Addison had proclamed this exclusive passion in inspired lines :

> Oh Liberty, thou Goddess heavenly bright
> Profuse of Bliss and pregnant with delight
> . . . . . .
> Thee, goddess, Thee Britania's isle adores (4).

All the poets, Pope, Thomson, Goldsmith, Cowper sang to the same effect.

1. *Epistle from Florence.* — 2. *To Mr. Conway* : The advice given to Conway is stoical. — 3. *Epilogue to the Times.*

> Be he to England's cause and freedom's true
> Nor fashion led, with indifference view
> The venal many and the virtuous few.

4. J. Addison. *Poems on several occasions. A letter from Italy. The*

This love of liberty united to love of country, Walpole found quite congenial to his temper. Speaking to Ashton as a tutor of a young prince, he says (1) :

Oh ! there imprint with strongest deepest dye
The lovely form of Goddess Liberty !
For her in Senates be he trained to plead.
For her in battles be he trained to bleed.

And elsewhere alluding to the Greeks fighting Xerxes.

When armed for Liberty, a few how brave,
How weak a multitude, where each a slave.

Or again :

« Who draws the sword of freedom justly draws. »

Throughout his *Epistle* the same love of Liberty breathes with the greatest intensity as it does also in the *Epilogue to Tamerlane* spoken in Drury Lane, « Freedom's favourite seat, »on the day when « festal rites attend the morn,

Of Liberty restored and William born » (2)

Again it inspires the *Inscription* « for the neglected Column », that scathing satire against the princes of the House of Medici.

Great from the wounds of dying Liberty (3).

Miscellaneous Works. London, MDCCLXVI, Vol I, p. 39. This Liberty that crowns Britain's Isle. — 1. *Epistle from Florence*. — 2. Works. I Spoken on Nov. 4 th. 1746 at Drury Lane : Cf. Genest *Account* IV p. 201. Walpole goes so far as to extol in the highest terms, William, Duke of Cumberland (the Butcher) who in his poetry is « the tyrant's scourge and blessing of mankind. » — 3. Works. I p. 17.

Love of Country mixed with great pride was, next to love of freedom, the favourite theme of poets from Addison downwards (1). Walpole in several passages has paid in full measure his tribute to the worship of his country.

In the present case, this well known theme is after all nothing more or less than the one suggested by patriotic pride and so frequently dealt with in the English literature of those times. Vergil (2) had provided the model ; Charles Montagu, Lord Halifax in his *Man of Honour* had aptly imitated it, and still more successfully Addison in his *Letter from Italy* had consecrated it (3). Some passages from his *Epistle from Florence* then, may entitle Walpole to rank among Whig panegyrical poets such as Halifax, Prior, Addison and Tickell. Britannia's (4)

1. Cf. Addison *op. cit.* p. 49.

« We envy not the warmer clime that lies
In ten degrees more indulgent skies...
The ambitious Gaul beholds with secret dread
Her [Britannia's] thunder aimed at his aspiring head. »
Here are Walpole's lines
« Britannia smiling viewes her golden plains
From mitred bondage free and papal chains.
Lords of themselves the happy rustics sing
Each of his little tenement the king.
Twice did usurping Rome extend her hand
To re-inslave the new deliver'd land,
Twice were her sable bands to battle warm'd
With pardons, bulls and texts, and murthers arm'd.....
Epistle from Florence

2. Cf. The well known passage in the *Æneid* (VI, 847, s. q. q) Anchises' speech to Æneas in Hades :

Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera...
Tu regere imperio, populos, Romane, memento.

3. Cf. *Man of Honour* and *Letter from Italy* : Let other nations boast their fruitful soil. Other with towering piles etc. *Miscellaneous Works in Verse and Prose*, London 1776, Vol. I p. 51. — 4. *Epistle from*

.....Jocund sons are
Securely quiet, innocently gay.....

while, as Walpole says, « Victor George :

To willing Indians deals our equal laws ».

This panegyrical account of England is fairly long, but it is not repeated many times, for Walpole's achievements are mainly in the satirical line. But it should be noticed that Walpole's love of history and his liking for proper names make themselves felt everywhere (1) ; he seldom affects vague generalities and rather tends to crowd his verse with historical memories and allusions. This is all the more remarkable as he has, once at least and very forcibly, (2) expressly stated that learning, must not be pedantic and dull. His own erudite industry, he apparently looked upon as not being of « this awkward stuff. » Otherwise, here, as in his prose, the condition of things he praises, is the time when in « ..... th'Athenian state », « Learning and Politeness were the same » and « Philosophy, with gentle arts, refined » the « impractised mind ».

In an extempore piece of poetry (3), he says jestingly that he is « nice » ; « no Latin book, no *Bible*, no cookery book are to be found on his table » and, (rather ironically it is to be supposed, though there was some truth in it), he pretends he never reads any thing but Crébillon or La Calprenède.

In keeping with this love of politeness and refinement, we have seen his liking for feminine beauty as repre-

Florence at the end. — 1. In the *Epilogue written for Mrs. Clive*, she is made to compare her retirement to Charles-Quint's. — 2. *Epistle from Florence*. First lines. — 3. *Lett.*, Octob. 12, 1743.

sented by beautiful pictures (1), and he himself more than once has attempted to emulate the painter's art with his poetry as, he had already endeavoured to do in prose (2).

But Walpole's intellectual passions are more of a negative kind than anything else ; at least these antagonistic feelings are more strongly expressed than his love, his liking or his fondness for anything. We shall see later that, by way of contrast, Walpole had only to follow the bent of his genius, as well as the tendencies of most men of his political party, to express angry indignation against Popery and even disrespect for religion (3) and regal power. Next came hatred and scorn of foreigners and foreign countries, and spiteful wrath against all pedants. Very glaring for instance is his contemptuous hatred of « Popery », « Romish faith » and even religion ; far more conspicuous than his love of liberty is his animosity against France, and far more obvious and definite than his love of philosophy and of polite learning, is his scornful dislike of pedants.

In a playful manner Walpole is given to scoffing when referring to religious matters. When in earnest he is violently indignant and acrimonious.

That he should have alluded to Doomsday about two dead bullfinches (4), is perhaps no great mark of disrespect (though in a Puritanical country the fact is noticeable). Again, just a slight sneer at Methodism (5) does not mean

1. *Epistle from Florence, Epistle to Mr Eckardt, Lines on the Three Vernons.* — 2. *Sermon on Painting.*

3. Though, he, of course, professed deep respect for religion, he was well aware that, in his « Epistle from Florence », he had gone such lengths that he might raise much disgust and indignation in such narrow circles as Cambridge (cf. G. Middleton. L *Toyn. Sup.*, vol. I, p. 45).

4. Cf. *Epitaph on the two Bullfinches of Lady Ossory.* — 5. *Epilogue to*

much. But a very bitter mood is far more frequent (1). Quite early in life he began to inveigh against « Superstition » (2), deriding the « Sainted Calendar (3) » and « Bigots who joy in canonizing shades, » and those who send up their prayers to heaven in a foreign tongue (4). Bigotry wages battle with sense (5). Popery he hates, because it is a fraud, being with its saints but a form of Paganism (6) ; then it is unclean and immoral : The « dark cloister's mysterious rites » and their « grosser arts », must be « hidden from the Muse ». Grossness and coarseness never (openly at least), (7) agreed with Walpole. « Cynics » among the Ancients, an « uncouth, selfish race » of manners foul, and boastful of disgrace « brutes », full of ignominy had always excited his strongest disgust (8).

Still more does he loathe « cloister'd monkeries, » their

Mysterious Mother. — 1. *The Funeral of the Lioness.* Some lines of the *Epilogue to Tamerlane* are written in the playful mood : Had the Pretender succeeded, Saint Ignatius would have been stronger than Cato ; and a Capuchin would have been the evil genius of Brutus. — 2. *In memory of King Henry VI.* — 3. — 4. *Ibid.* — 5. *Epilogue to Tamerlane.*

6. Cf. *Epistle from Florence.* « Matthew's Eagle is Prometheus' Vulture », Ganymede is an angel, Apollo is rewarded with « sainthood » (saint Apollo) and an old statue of Jupiter is turned into Saint Peter's ; Astarte becomes « Jewish Mary ». These notions about the incorporation of pagan beliefs into the Catholic Church, he had principally derived from Conyers Middleton's *A letter from Rome* « showing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism », or « a Religion of the present Romans derived from that of their heathen ancestors. » — The first edition : London printed for W. Innys 1729. — The letter is in prose and the concluding sentence shows what the author intends to prove — that the present people of Rome are as guilty of the same crime of Superstition and Idolatry as their Pagan ancestors. « A Prefatory Discourse » and appendix were added in 1741. Allibone says that C. Middleton had to retract this letter that he might keep his post. D. N. B. on the contrary says it was applauded by the Orthodox English divines as an attack on Popery.

7. His correspondence and Gray's show some traces of coarseness which it is only fair to ascribe to the times. — 8. *Letter from Florence* [cf. his disrespect : The priest some blessed thing mutters over etc.] *Works,* I,

« foul manners » and their crimes. The half humorous, half derisive mood which sometimes he seems to borrow from a vision of the *Dunciad's* fat, purple Abbots « purple as their vines » (1), his lofty and highly appreciative view of a beneficent Pope (2), are things completely foreign to his temper, when he is writing his poetry. The priest, as he represents him there, is a « hoary hypocrite » « counting a chaplet with a bigot care », « or mumbling somewhat 'twixt a charm and a prayer, » and elsewhere there comes the Pretender.

> A general ruin on his sword he wears
> Fatal alike to audience and to play'rs.
> For ah! my sons, what freedom for the stage,
> When bigotry with sense shall battle Wage?
> When monkish laureates only wear the bays,
> Inquisitors lord Chamberlains of plays (3)?

Many and manifold are the instances of his contemptuous, attitude which is equalled only by his loathing of regal power. The enslaving of nations, nay of humanity, by « priestcraft » and then by kings, rouses both his abomination and his disrespect and is reflected throughout his life in his poetry (4).

We see (5) the Prelate who « sanctions » « the bad king ». « Mischief springs from the hallowed fountain » ; often as the monarch has « sucked in » « the sacred grease » « at every pore » he becomes a « tool » of the clergy (6).

pp. 9, 10. — 1. Cf. *Dunciad*. IV, 303.— 2. Benedict XIV for whom he wrote an Epitaph.—3. *Epilogue to Tamerlane* Nov. 4. 1746. — 4. Cf. Oct. 12. 1771. The piece « In days of old » : And love avenged a realm by priests enslaved and, June 1788, the piece « When mitred masters ». It seems he wants a portrait of Laud to be removed.—5. *Epistle from Florence*.—6. *The Funeral*

He is not conscious of it (1), for he is as foolish as he is cruel, but he is a tool just the same, like the « romantic heroes prodigal of blood » whom Walpole does not like. Nor does he like fanatics and martyrs ; one of his wishes is that there should be none « Nor grim enthusiasts vex Britannia more » (Epil. to M. M.) or Saints, whom he said in the same epilogue, ... « are the produce of a vicious age ». The half contemptuous, half pitiful feelings he expresses for Charles I. (in the *Epistle*) who, in his eyes, was but a tool, are quite characteristic of these republican sentiments mingled with his contempt for martyrs. All these revolting actions, the priest christens « Right Divine ». Indeed four lines sum up Walpole's feelings on the subject.

> « The greatest curses any age has known
> Have issued from the Temple or the Throne,
> Extent of ills from kings at first begins.
> But priests must aid and consecrate their sins ».

and to conclude he says :

> « Thus have I try'd of kings and Priests to sing.
> And all the ills that from their vices spring ».

These lines were quite conform to the spirit of the times; had not Pope said, when waging war against not priest but pedants :

> May you my Cam and Isis preach it long
> The Right Divine of Kings to govern wrong (2)?

From these ills and vices the Princes of the House of Hanover are as exempt as their ancestor William of Nas-

of the Lioness.—1. The monarch may be a Queen, an iron sceptered queen like Catherine of Russia. — 2. *Dunciad. B*, IX, 187 — *Lett.* — 3 Dec. 15, 1743

sau. « Victor George » receives Walpole's applause as well as that of his country, but William especially is Walpole's favourite ; he is (1)

« The tyrant's scourge and blessing of mankind ».

Indeed Walpole's notion of regal power is well expressed in his poetry. The piece : « Thou senseless Hall » (2), plainly declares what the *Funeral of the Lioness* hints in a sly and satirical manner : Kings are a prey to flattery and flatterers and quite blinded by adulation.

.... « blinded monarchs flattery's fondled race
Their favourite minions stamped with titl'd grace
And bade the tool of power succeed in virtue's place ».

When praised by all those who truckle before him,

« The monarch lion growl'd content,
Stood on four tiptoes, grasped his sword,
Strutted, prepared to be adored (3) etc...
With crowned heads, flattery will please »,

while truth is death. So much the more is it to be lamented when true nobility in her flower, when the elite are no longer admitted to fulfil their own task, that of ruling the land. What a pity when « Spencers (4), Gavestons, by crimes grown great », or « dainty Villiers » sit

. . . . . in high debate
« Where manly Beauchamps, Talbots, Cecils sate ! »

1. And so is William of Cumberland ! Cf. *Epilogue to Tamerlane*. — 2. *Dunciad B*, IX, 187 *Lett.* 3. Dec. 15, 1743. — 3. Cf. *The Funeral of the Lioness*. — 4. Cf. « Thou senseless Hall ». Dec. 15.1743. *Letters*, I. 397-398-98. Scandalized at some new preferments, he sends the first fruits of his

What Walpole wants to see is a time when (1).

> No tyrant Stuart shall to crosiers give
> And borrow from the gift Prerogative;
> Each free Lord shall his own right assert
> Nor vassals be enchained but by the heart.

That France should be constantly referred to as an enslaved country and England's principal enemy, (2) may seem strange and hardly fair in a man, who even in his poetry assured (3) that « he never read anything but Crébillon or Calprenède », who wrote a piece to Madame de Sévigné, and a heartfelt portrait of his friend M^me^ du Deffand. He certainly ought to have had more lenient feelings for the rival country. True it is supercilious scorn he expresses, more than hatred, against « the Gaul » who fought in « Fontenoy's empurpled plains (4) », or the Frenchman who has prepared (5) useless flat bottomed boats to cross the Channel. (6)

« The French soldiers rather hungry than bold », fight « for ministers richly deserving to swing » and under « commanders whose recompense should be a string ». His contempt for the foreign, i.e. the « French » critic, for « French models », for « wit » made up of French grimaces. (7) bears testimony to his strong patriotism and wins for him the feelings of his audience.

« Free as your country, Britons be your scene ».

With, Frenchmen, pedants are in the last category of

indignation to H. Mann. — 1. « When mitred masters... », June 29. 1788. 2. Here again Addison had led the way with his *Letter from Italy :* The ambitious Gaul beholds with secret dread, etc. and his poem *the Campaign.* — 3. *Lett.*, Dec. 23. 1761. — 4. *Lett.*, oct. 12, 1743. — 5. *Lines to Conway.* — 6. Rather ironically, it must be confessed. O yes ! here are flat bottomed boats. — 7. *Prologue to the Mysterious Mother.* — *Epilogue to Braganza.*

persons for whom Walpole, an admirer of the *Dunciad* (1), has a disdainful dislike. It is not a schoolboy's or student's spite which makes him impatient of the « schoolman's jargon », of the « pedantic teacher winking dull » ; it is the contempt of the « fine gentleman » for dry scientific studies and painstaking industry ; the contempt of the well-bred man for what he is pleased to think the awkward manners of other people whose social standing is inferior to his own.

This comes from Walpole's disposition for writing satire ; his Prologues and Epilogues also bear testimony to this satirical tendency (2), but this aptitude, he did not care to turn to account, either for the reasons given above or possibly because he did not take himself seriously enough even for that.

On the contrary, quite the opposite of the sneering critic, do we find in the same *Prologues* and *Epilogues* another characteristic which is still more noticeable elsewhere : that of the man who confines himself to fulfilling the courteous duties of a narrow and refined social circle and is constantly paying homage and dealing out compliments. His own fondness for praise may have incited him to bestow praise on others, with the secret hope that he would be honoured by getting something of the kind in return.

The Beauties is not so much a compliment to Eckhardt, the painter, as to numerous English families who could boast of such feminine attractiveness (3). The *Parish register of Twickenham* is full of compliments, and so is

1. *Dunciad :* book IV. — 2. Especially his *Epilogue to the Times,* a comedy, which we are told, contains a scathing and ironical satire of London. — 3. The Fermors (Sophia and Julia), The Duchess of Grafton, the Countess of Aylesbury among them.

the *Garland* (1) which is so much of a compliment in itself from beginning to end, that Walpole finds it necessary to mark the difference between himself and « a servile Bard ». Compliments everywhere and for everybody ; to the Vernons ; to M^me^ de Forcalquier (2) ; to the Duchess of Grafton (3) ; to a lady who suffers from Saint Anthony's fire (4), about the « fresh lustre of her eyes » ; compliments to Anna, Countess Temple, when he prints her poems; compliments engraved on a vase in a garden ; to celebrate Mrs. Clive the matchless actress, or the Duke of Cumberland ; (5) compliments to King George (6) ; compliments to England, the « nation brave, sensible and free » (7) ; compliments to M^me^ du Deffand (8), and others. Here are some samples of these compliments. When Lady Mary Coke has Saint Anthony's fire in her cheek, Walpole cannot help writing a few lines on the subject.

No rouge you wear, nor can a dart
From Love's bright quiver wound your heart.
And thought you, Cupid and his mother
Would unrevenged their anger smother ?
No, no — from heaven they sent the fire
That boasts saint Anthony its sire ;
They pour'd it on one peccant part,
Inflamed your cheek, if not your heart.

1. July 19. 1761. — 2. *Lett.* VI. 394, Jan. 11. 66. — 3. *Lett.*, June 13. 1761, ye simple astronomers lay by your glass. — 4. *Lett.*, December 23-176. — 5. *Epilogue to Tamerlane.* — 6. *Ibid.* — 7. *Epilogue written for Mrs Clive.* — 8. *Portrait of M^me^ du Deffand.* Cf. XIV. 93. « My gallantry of former days », when setting congratulory verses to Miss Berry, in type. Cf. *Lett.*, V, 27-328 such verses for M^mes^ de Boufflers and Dusson. Gray (*Lett.*, nov. 28.1761) had lately written a gallant piece of poetry to Miss Speed.

In vain — for see the crimson rise,
And dart fresh lustre through your eyes.

But, of all others, Lady Temple has the most ample share of compliments : Sappho's lyre is supposed to have been kept « in a cavern », by the « guardians of the OEonian well », because no poetess gifted with sufficient genius could be found to be entrusted with « the sacred shell ». When lady Temple struck its chords « spontaneous numbers from her touch arose ».

Long has been lost enchanting Sappho's lyre,
Its graceful warblings, and its tender fire ;
No more the guardians of the OEonian well
To wanton hands would trust their sacred shell ;
When wand'ring thoughtless o'er the tuneful hill,
When wand'ring thoughtless of th'inspiring rill,
Chance guided Temple to the secret shade,

Where the shy sisters had the music laid,
Its form unusual caught her curious eye ;
She touch'd it, and it, murmur'd Melody.
Across the chords an artless sweep she flings ;
Airs, vernal airs, return the vocal strings.
Again her fingers o'er the lines she throws ;
Spontaneous numbers from her touch arose,
Surpris'd she hears th'unmeditated lay ;
Pleas'd and surpris'd, repeats th' harmonious play.

« Whence flow these numbers undesign'd ? » she cries.
« Those numbers are your own » ; the lyre replies.
« The seeds of genuine poesy, tho' unknown ;
« By parent Phœbus in your soul were sown ;
« Too modest to expect the growth you see,
« To wake them into life you wanted me ».

Copies of verse, drawn off from the expensive toy, his press, made him play the part of poet laureate to the titled ladies, foreign or native, in whose honour they were composed. At the same time also he slyly advertised his own poems in his letters :

« My Duchess (1) was to set out this morning. I saw her for the last time the day before yesterday at Lady Kildare's : never was a journey less a party of pleasure. She was so melancholy, that all Miss Pelham's oddness and my spirits could scarce make her smile. Towards the end of the night, and that was three in the morning, I did divert her a little. I slipped Pam (2) into her lap, and then taxed her with having it there. She was quite confounded ; but taking it up, saw he had a telescope in his hand, which I had drawn, and that the card, which was split, and just waxed together, contained these lines.

« Ye simple astronomers lay by your glasses ;
The transit of Venus has proved you all asses ;
Your telescopes signify nothing to scan it ;
'Tis not meant in the clouds, 'tis not meant of a planet ;
The seer who foretold it mistook or deceives us,
For Venus's transit is when Grafton leaves us ».

I don't send your Ladyship these verses as good, but to show you that all gallantry does not centre at the Hague (3). »

It was with such flattery that the fair ones were, we know, really in Elysium : (4) But Walpole was not at all

1. — The Duchess of Grafton. — 2. A young boy. (?) — 3. *The Letters of Horace Walpole,* vol. V, 1760-1764, p. 66. —4. *Ibid.*, as an example of pretty poetry the following may be pointed out.

By these presents be it known.
To all who bend, before our throne, etc..

times such a smooth, soft spoken person. There is indeed, now and then a sort of hardness, or harshness, in some of the thoughts the author expresses, which is rather striking.

These failings had to be noticed though too great a stress should not be laid on them.

The lines in the portrait of Granville (1) about his fondness for the bottle, are hard and unpleasant, some parts of the *Epistle from Florence* show a rough and rigid temper ; the end of Madame du Deffand's portrait is almost rude in its directness.

« Censure, be dumb, she's old and blind ».

In Mrs. Clive's epilogue, he made her it seems, far too cringing and stooping before the audience.

> « Content with humble means, yet proud to own
> I owe my pittance to your smiles alone. »

On the whole Walpole's poetry shows him, in what Macaulay has been pleased to consider his most accustomed garb, that of a trifler, the « trifler of the band », as the poet himself says somewhere (2). The man who writes a fable for Miss Hotham (3), or who leaves a « Card on the Duchess of Queensberry's toilet », or writes riddles on a looking glass, on a sun-dial (4) etc ; may be indeed a trifler, but he was witty, and none the less a shrewd man. His shrewdness he exhibits in the Prologue to the *Mysterious Mother*. He played there the same trick he had played in the Preface to *Otranto*, flattering his audience, that it may take his part against foreign ways, and be reconciled to the horror of his tragedy.

1. *Works*, I, p. 31. — 2. *Parish Register*. — 3. *The Magpie and her brood*. — 4. « *Or a ballad like Jeffrey's* ».

Shall foreign critics teach you how to think ?

Moreover, Walpole's manners and life are to some extent reflected in his poetry : his political views, the interest he took in art, his life at Twickenham, his Gothic fancies, all his characteristic moods (1) find a place in it. He even indicates the qualities which lie nearest his heart (2), wit, memory, fancy, judgement, reason « slave of truth and passion's queen ». Contrasting with this, another trait of his character is noticeable in his poems. It constitutes from the literary and æsthetic point of view one of his most conspicuous features. However, it is in opposition with his dislike of pedantry. The allusive nature of his poetry, the learned, scholarly, and even bookish character of his inspiration are indeed most striking. Not only are historical allusions always uppermost in his mind, when he writes verse, but classical reminiscences also are most frequent under his pen.

His scholarly, classical and mythological reminiscences give to most of his pieces a learned and laboured

1. *Parish register.*

Where silver Thames round Twitnam meads
« His winding current sweetly leads » etc.

And the *Entail* :

« In a fair summer's radiant morn
« A Butterfly, divinely born,
« Whose lineage dated from the mud
« Of Noah's or Deucalion's flood » etc.

[*The Entail*, a Fable].

On sending the Fable to Conway (*Lett.*, III, 257). The Fable is certainly not worth giving or refusing [The *Card to Lady Blandford* gives interesting details about Strawberry].

2. In his *Epitaphium vivi auctoris*, he assumes like old Horace a pretence for the cultivation of « aurea mediocritas » and the golden mean in life Cf. also *Parish Register* about : Bolingbroke : Bliss comes not from ruling worlds, but from despising them, and having [Portrait of Lord Gran-

appearance which at times bespeaks halting inspiration, rather than an easy and warm flow of imagination. Vergil, Juvenal, Horace, Lucan, and Martial contribute something to his poetry (1); he borrows thoughts from them, and part of his assumed manner.

His well-composed and generally close-packed paragraphs display his liking for well-ordered arrangement (2). He aims at vigour of thought and description ; with the help of his models, he endeavours to « think » and « paint » strongly and vividly.

Such strength he had managed to catch, according to Gray, with the spirit of Dryden (3) in his *Epistle*, which, Gray remarks, breathes the spirit of « Satire », and not of the « still small voice of poetry » which could not make itself heard. The lines on the royal unction, on the papal dominion, on convents, on Henry VIII. and Charles I. may be « the shining part » of the *Epistle* (4). They are only parts of a work which stands, as a whole, one thought being, as well as possible, connected with the other; transitions may be awkward, they are never abrupt.

But the eloquent or lyric impulse never gives the impression of being very strong. We are notre minded of *Absalom and Achitophel*, and though the thoughts may have distinction and originality, or picturesque vividness, they very seldom soar to great heights. Walpole, whatever

ville] a boundless scorn of fools ; the precepts of Roman virtue are now a long way off; but the end of the Prologue to the M. M. is wholly against hypocrisy, which under any form Walpole seems to loathe as much as ever. — 1. Portrait of Madame Du Deffand. *Henry VI. Epistle.* — 2. For instance about Zeuxis often mentioned or again in, To Anna, Countess Temple he speaks of The Guardian of the Æonian well. — 3. *Henry VI, Epistle.* — 4. Gray. *The Cor.*, II, 92. The expression is of course taken

he may have wished to be, is not so much a disciple of Dryden, as he is of Addison, if not of Waller and Prior. From Addison he probably borrowed the idea of his *Epistle from Florence*. The *Letter from Italy* probably suggested the Epistle as much as did Conyers, Middleton's « Letter from Rome » ; and not only, was the subject-matter greatly inspired by Addison's *Letter* (1) ; but also the manner with the clean-cut paragraph, the skilfully managed transitions, resembles Addison's very much indeed. The *Beauties*, though a pieces of quite a different kind were also imitated from Addison's (2) *Epistle to Kneller*. In fact, many of Walpole's tendencies may be traced to the influence of that « Whig panegyrical poetry, » panegyrical meaning satirical when the subject required it; a kind, very much cultivated in the early XVIII^th^ century.

Yet however florid and laboured may be Walpole's thoughts in his serious poetry, the picturesque element is never totally absent and this is its redeeming feature. A sincere feeling for the beauty of King's College Chapel, a very faint echo of Milton's manner in *Il Penseroso* (3), some

from the Bible. — 1. In the letter from Italy the leit-motiv of Whig panegyrical poetry is still more forcibly and more often expressed perhaps than any where else : But what awail,

The smiles of Nature and the charms of Art. . . . . .

in Italy, and Italy means the Continent, while,

Proud oppression in her Valleys reign.

2. *Addison's Works. op. cit.* In his *Letter from Italy*, Addison had also alluded to painting. And he too could be « panegyrical ».

Fain would I, Raphael's godlike art rehearse
And show th' immortal labour in my verse

3. For instance, A clever and rather successful attempt to express the effect produced by organ music.

Along the vaulted roofs sweet strains decay
And liquid Hallelujahs melt away.

fire when giving vent to his antipapist feelings, a voluptuous sensuousness when conjuring up the glorious shapes, forms, and visions with which Sir Peter Lely's pencil graced Windsor Castle, all these help to make his subject matter interesting.

But it was not when treating a subject that Walpole was at his best.

There is such a thing as poetry without a subject, poetry which has no smack of literary entreprise, but which means something extremely fanciful, with possibly a little bit of circumstantial truth for support, something, which entirely depends on personal and local charm and on its own invention. There, Walpole shows himself to his best advantage.

The beginning of the piece of elegant flattery called *The Garland*, which may be looked upon as a *Guirlande de Julie* in little, is remarkable enough. Indeed, in this pretty part, Walpole calls to our minds the metaphysical taste for conceit which we meet in the poets of a former age, while these fancies find their expression in the fashionable couplet measure of his own day. In them we meet pleasant and happy discoveries of analogies and imaginative apprehension of identities, which show how subtle Walpole's mind could be in a poetical way. Farther on, the poem degenerates into the poetical cant of such perfunctory effusions. But the opening lines deserve to be quoted.

THE GARLAND

In private life, where Virtues safely bloom,
What flow'rs diffuse their favourite perfume ?
Devotion first the Garland's front commands,
Like some fair Lily borne by Angel hands.

Next, filial Love submissive warmth displays,
Like Heliotropes, that court their parent rays.
Friendship, that yields its fragrance but to those
That near approach it, like the tender Rose,
As royal Amaranths, unchanging Truth ;
And Violet-like, the bashful blush of youth.
Chaste Purity by no loose heat misled,
Like virgin Snowdrops in a winter bed.
Prudence, the Sensitive, whose leaves remove
When hands, too curious, would their texture prove.
Bounty, full-flush'd at once with fruit and flower,
As Citrons give and promise ev'ry hour.
Soft Pity last, whose dews promiscuous fall,
Like lavish Eglantines, refreshing all.
How blest a cottage where such Virtues dwell !
To Heaven ascends the salutary smell :

Fancy and originality are visible almost everywhere. Even when describing or imitating, Walpole in his portraits of kings and queens (1) has displayed some originality. This is what gives to his historical survey of English dynasties a distinct boldness and picturesqueness of touch which perhaps surpasses that of finer and better known works of the same kind (2).

In fable-writing, which the talent of Gay and that of Edward Moore had recently illustrated, Walpole managed to be intensely original. His *Funeral of the Lioness* is the funeral of an English queen, with a very stupid monarch for a husband as all monarchs (except King George) were. As to her subjects, we know what intense disdain Walpole had for « the shaggy Barons » and, « their dames » who coming « from distant woods and Highlands », pressed and crowded « to show at once their dignity and woe ».

1. *Epistle.* — 2. Addison's *Account of English poetry.* Gray's *Progress of*

When the Lion-king hears of the want of feeling and the disaffection shown by the stag, he cries.

« Call all my guards, my grenadiers
« Call my own regiment of bears etc...

In the piece addressed « To Coelia » (1750) a neat and short piece written very much after Swift's pungent manner we find the picturesque touch with proper names and names of places : Pall Mall, Cheapside etc.

But it is not the picturesque note only which confers some originality on Walpole's poetry ; it is his humour which is felt still more frequently in his poetry than in his letters. In these, though after 1742 or thereabouts it is always present, it is not patent everywhere ; in his light poetry, it is manifest in a great many places ; it is generally made up of irony, a flat refusal to take things and people, (including himself) seriously, at their own estimate (1). Whole pieces are full of humour from beginning to end. More than once his humour is directed against himself (2) or Strawberry Hill (3) ; he even laughs at his own antipapism (4) and it is difficult to say when he takes himself seriously or not. Whenever he displays his humour, his thoughts are generally easy and graceful, and expressed with great fluency and lightness of motion. Such passages as the one beginning

« Boh, what, not sorrow for the queen (5), etc.

or the beginning of the *Card* or the *Three Vernons*, or still more especially the whole piece « To Countess Temple appointed poet laureate », or the *Entail* are eminently graceful. Others, which have nothing in particular to recom-

Poetry. — 1. *Funeral of the Lioness.* — 2. *Card to Lady Blandford, Epilogue to M.M. Entail.* — 3. *Card.* — 4. *Epil. Tamerlane.* — 5. *Funeral.*

mend them, « Coelia who had now completed... », the Epitaphes on the bull-finches, the short poem « What a rout do you make for a poor simple kiss », and the « Sonnet » prefixed to *Otranto*, though not clever or interesting pieces have all the quality of grace ; sometimes wit helps the author to give to his work this appearance of gracefulness, sometimes it is mere « préciosité ». Wit, however in the form of witticism, is rare except in the riddles, but neither the *Three Vernons*, nor the *Epilogue for Mrs. Clive*, in which Walpole makes visible attempts at it, are particularly smart. Sometimes we come across some witty and amusing thought (1) but it is never especially striking, except in the fable, *the Entail*, which is witty from beginning to end. Indeed, Walpole's « préciosité » (2), or witticism are not so much to be found in the thought as in the expression.

They are a trick of style more than anything else. In this kind of light poetry, though the poet may exhibit several qualities and knowledge of various sorts — know-

1. This for instance in order to say that Strawberry Hill is not in spite of its aspect, so very very old :

« This ancient ivy-mantled seat
Is still less ancient than its ancient Lord. »

Paying compliments to your audience is often tricky work, however and the result is sometimes a little awkward: c f. a compliment paid to Lady Anna Campbell Countess Stratford in the *Beauties* comparing her to Diana, and saying.

« With every charm to rule the night. »

or saying to Madame du Deffand that she is old and blind, or telling Eckhardt the painter, alluding to the « native wit » of his model :

Eckhardt, for these thy art's too faint
You may admire but you cannot paint.

2. An example « of préciosité of thought » is to be found in « The Frolic Boy unfortunately gay » ; the gentle pair of boys should not repine at their fate, they could not live without being together and now they are

ledge of the worlde specially — the matter he deals with is generally somewhat trivial. It is with the style in consequence that lies the whole gist of the question (1). Style is of primary importance when dealing with « trifles » made of nothing, and which owe nothing to the subject (2).

When Walpole wrote, it was considered Addison tells us that « an early acquaintance with the « classics » (3) was what may be called the good breeding of poetry, as it gives a certain gracefulness which never forsakes a mind that contracted it in youth, and there began to be a great demand for correctness (4) ». One had to be « first fashioned by the ancient models », then « familiarised to propriety of thought and chastity of style ». The attempts towards elegance, an elegance not free from pedantry, of course, had developed into the extensive use (5) of epithets, of periphrastic expressions, personification of abstract ideas, and consequently a continual use of the possessive case, of comparisons, very frequent antithesis, either within two lines in a couplet or sometimes within the two hemistichs of the same line. Adjectives, substantives or verbs are with great symmetry and with the help of alliteration, opposed to each other ; last of all, the writer constantly resorts to inversion. All these characteristics are the privilege of the poet ; they help him to differentiate his language from that of prose (6) to make his thought more shining, his satire more biting with anti-

both in Elysium. — 1. Cf. Augustine Birrell : *Selected Essays*. London. Edinburgh. — 2. Johnson on Waller (*Lives of the Poets*). — 3. Cf. *Preface to Addison's Works*, p. XII. — 4. *Ibid*, XIII. — 5. Cf. R. Huchon, *Crabbe*, p. 620 s. q. q. and the notes which contain a discriminating analysis of poetic diction and numerous examples. — 6. Cf. Johnson. *Life of Dryden*.

thesis : inversion helps him to find rhyme more easily when it is wanted. Monotony, hardness of the distichs, obscurity of style and thought are the obvious drawbacks of such a style, which, when writing epistles, satires, etc., it had become the fashion to adopt : Walpole following the predominant fashion adopted it. An early piece like « The Frolic Boy » shows with all its characteristics, the style which was likely to offer itself naturally to a clever and intelligent boy in 1736 : a number of epithets, — one for nearly every substantive (1), comparison, personification (2), antithesis set off by questions or exclamations (3), sentences united by « nor » or « no more » or « and » at the beginning of the sentence.

Periphrastic expressions, however, are not to be met with ; and it is worth noticing that Walpole seldom makes use of them (4). There is something undeniably weak in a periphrastic expression, which does not suit his love of direct and strong speech and forcible, nay striking, language.

1. Some of the most trite and poorest kind . frolic boy, little play, gentle pair, yielding bank, soft sail : adverbial epithets. V. g. unfortunately gay, are also frequent : This last with the opposition of thought it contained was probably looked upon as being particularly felicitous. Also double epithets : « flag waving hand. » — 2. The river God, the tyrant of the flood. — 3. Frequent enough in some poems : *The Garland* is almost entirely made up of comparisons : v. g. « The Frolic Boy » : Ah !... why vainly pious, why untimely good.

4. In *Henry VI*, a church is « the temple of the living God » but this can hardly be called a periphrastic expression. On the contrary, though now and then, Walpole uses such an assemblage of words as « votive maid », for a nun (*Epistle*) « the gardner's tube » for a gun [*Magpie*], he affects too the exact word rather than shuns it, following in this an example not unfrequently given by Pope. V. g. With pardons, bulls. and texts and murthers armed. He dares even to use realistic and repulsive expressions : sore-eyed gum of tears. *Epistle*.

Sometimes the expression fails him and is as weak as the thought that supports it (1).

But this is quite contrary to the wishes of Walpole; he wants to make his thought as striking as can be. His vocabulary, which is very often idiomatic and racy, is quite in keeping with the independent turn of his mind; considered in relation to the other pieces contained in Dodsley's *Collection*, it compares with most of them very favourably and in an interesting manner from that point of view. Indeed Walpole's poetical language is one of the most striking instances of the shaking off, or non-acceptance, of the conventionalities of style (2).

As his poetry, both serious and light, is generally of a marked epigrammatic tendency, antithesis, either between the thoughts or in the words, or still more often between both, is the glaring device to which he constantly resorts, sometimes not unsuccessfully (3).

His inversions, which are innumerable, are not often quite so felicitous. They frequently result in a poor or even faulty arrangement of sentences, which greatly

1. The weakness is to be felt all the more as these are concluding lines which Walpole vould probably have liked to make strong. For inst.

« To build the free, the sensible good man » (*Epistle.*)

And also this very poor line from the *Epistle* :

« In the free commerce of productive love »

And the expression : to catalogue all these royal bad (*Epistle*).

Bestowed a kingdom and denied him bread.
Id. Epitaph for Theodorus.

Let it relate... Not what he was, but what he should have done
(*Inscription on a neglected Column.*)

2. Cf. Louis Cazamian. *L'évolution psychologique de la Littérature anglaise,* Paris, 1920, p. 139.

3. Examples abound :

Opposition between two lines :

From Catherine's wrongs a Nation's bliss was spread,
And Luther's light from Henry's lawless bed.
End of the piece *In days of old.*

increases their obscurity. From the strong but easily intelligible inversion (1), to the jarring and almost shocking twisting of paragraph (2), or sentence (3), one has an ample selection of objectionable constructions to point out. What makes many of the sentences still more intricate and obscure is one of Walpole's favourite tricks; an almost unlimited use of incidental clauses. Sometimes

Opposition between two hemistichs (a)

The French no crimes of magnitude admit
They seldom startle, just alarm the pit.
(*Prologue to Mysterious Mother*).

Opposition between lines and hemistichs :

His wish to counsel monarchs or controul,
His means, the impetuous ardour of his soul.
(*Portrait of John, Earl of Granville*, 1763).

Where Mowbrays dwelt, how grocers dwell
How wits buy, what Barons sell... (The *Entail*)
Bestowed a kingdom and denied him bread.
(*Epitaph to Theodorus*).

a. To this should be added a practice not peculiar to Walpole, but which he has used to a very great extent a kind of break in the middle of the line, with a sudden stop and some witty or sharp or weighty sentence in the end :

Your Muses, Sir, are not free from ill
On Mount Parnassus or-on Strawberry Hill... Or :
« Their lesson lives before them-on the throne ».
(*Ep. M. M.*)

1. Remarkable instances are provided in the *Epilogue* spoken by Mrs Clive on her quitting the stage.

With glory satiate, from the bustling stage
Still in his prime... and much about my age
Imperial Charles...

2. Poor Charles...
His mad ambition had disturbed the globe
And sanguine, which he quitted, was the robe ; [*ibid.*]

3. Enroll his own such name among :
(*Parish Register*).

Or again. Oh! Steel my bosom for the sight,
Or the cold maid with passion warm.
Warm (the cold maid). (*To Love*).

it may be a mere oppositional clause which partakes of an inversion (1) ; of these oppositional sentences Walpole is extremely fond (2). It is but a consequence of his fondness for contrast generally. Moreover as they hardly require any connecting word, they greatly concur in making the paragraphs sharp and compact, and the distichs crisp. But Walpole's use of incidental clauses goes much farther (3), and united to his undeniable tendency to ellipses, it makes his style sometimes difficult and unpleasant. Such ellipses take the form of rather uncommon participial constructions (4), or more often that of the omission of some relative word or conjunctive expression (5), and (6) or a pronoun (7) or a verb (8). Yet most

1. There polish'd Essex wont to sport,
   The pride and victim of a court. (*Parish Register.*)

2. Yours is the task — and glorious is the plan. (*Epistle.*)

3. Cf. Thus I... (followed by two incidental clauses)
   Resign the noblest triumph, your applause.
   Epilogue to Mrs. Clive.

The last oppositional phrase is characteristic and from : « Where Fitzgerald... down to : Tis Pallas, in the *Beauties*.

4. Use of the active past participle instead of the passive past participle. Cf. « Failed the assassin king » ; *Epistle* (p. 7 , Dodsley's).
« Escaped a race ».
Inscription of a neglected column.

5. The savage nation plunged in crimes, for « being plunged ».
(*Funeral*).
Exhausted all the heavenly train ; for « having exhausted ».
(*Beauties*).
On the next prince expelled his native land. (*Epistle*).
Oft as these festal rites ; for : as oft as these.
They may possibly be due to Latin influence.

6. He swears an oath so dread
   The stoutest wasp that wears a sword
   Had trembled (*Entail*).

7. [I vowed] 'Twas I would finish etc. (who would) (*Ep. Mrs. Clive*).

8. How weak a multitude where each a slave (is) (*Epistle*). In the *Beauties* the sentence : With her the light... to Lyttleton, is without a verb. Also in the same : Let Zephyr own if half so well.

sentences are connected by some coordinative expression like « and », which is repeated several times in the same paragraphs, (1) or the frequently used « nor », without any other negative or affirmative corresponding expression in the sentence that precedes it (2). To these characteristics of his style should be added the familiar practice of vocative, or interrogative sentences (3), either seriously, or in a burlesque manner; the throwing back of the past participle after the noun it qualifies (4) and the use of foreign words (5), or of rather uncommon or obsolete phrases (6).

There are negligences, and awkward passages in many places; one understands that, about some of them, Gray should have candidly confessed to his aristocratic friend

1. *The Epistle* : and melt the schoolman's jargon down to sense — And a new Vandal tramples classic ground, and culls a useful flower from each historic age.

2. Nor blest with Aristides' soul (*To Conway*).

Nor with faint pencil (*Epistle*).

3. Cf. *Sonnet on Otranto*... — Sometimes interjections which are mere expletives for the sake of the measure.

Cf. : For ah! my sons (*To Tamerlane*) — But ah! the charm must cease (*Magpie*).

There is too much of that sort of thing in Walpole's verse, it must be confessed.

4. A bard enchained (*Prologue M. M.*) things possible etc. — 5. Relievo : in impudent relievo (*Neglected Column*). — 6. What time... (*Beauties*) Pass we, (*Epistle*) I stamp the stage (*Mrs. Clive*) : on the stage. Or the use of the personal pronoun « he » as a noun.

If some sanguine he, some lusty priest (*Epistle*)
The chosen He, *ibid* (a king)

Also the adverbial adjective used substantively :

The venal many and the virtuous few

Also an old (and incorrectly used) possessive form :

Jane, aunt and daughter of Buccleuh's his grace.
(*Beauties*).

that there were « many lines he could wish corrected and some blotted out » (1). As to the « beauties » which « are enough to atone for a thousand worse faults » than those Gray complained of, they do exist, though they are not particularly conspicuous in the pieces to which Gray alluded.

In many pieces, united to his attempt at the picturesque and idiomatic directness of speech and smooth flowing diction, a command of metre, and a sense of the possibilities of English verse, helped Walpole to write very interesting and agreeable passages.

He has made experiments in all sorts of measures and rhythms. Though not a voluminous writer, he tried his hand at the heroic couplet (2),and the octosyllabic verse (3), which were the two most common and fashionable metres of his time. The first he employed for his more weighty compositions, or his half serious, half familiar and burlesque prologues and epilogues ; the second in those poems which are his nearest approach to « lyric verse ». But departures from the regular and normal iambic measure are frequent enough : his treatment of the iambic pentametre with anapaestic variations (4) is rather remar-

1. *The Cor*, II, p. 94.

2. *Henry VI. Epistle. Prologues and Epilogues. Portrait of John Earl of Granville. Great Shades of Shakspeare.* Sept. 9, 1771. *To Gray. In days of old.* Oct. 12 th, 1771. *A Card to Lady Blandford* is also a good example of smooth and easy heroic couplet. — 3. *The Beauties. The Entail. The sonnet on Otranto* which — a remarkable thing for a Sonnet — is in octosyllabics. *To Love. The Parish Register of Twickenham. To a Lady, when about five years old, with a present of shells. Our abdicated monarch Lear.* Aug. 19 th, 1777. *In the Magpie and her brood* the introduction is in blank verse and the rest in octosyllabics. So are his *Lines to Conway* — 4. *The Advice.* A song. « What a rout do you make for a poor single kiss, » and most especially : Countess Temple appointed. Jan. 3 1763 and *M^me du Deffand's portrait;* to be added also : *To Lady C.*, 1778, with eyes black as sloes etc... and if it be Walpole's the Ballad. *Jeffrey*

kable ; so are, though in a lesser degree, some of his attempts at a trochaic measure, if not at trochaic verse entirely (1). This use of two free measures, which allowed frequent variation of feet and rhythm, provided the cadence be well preserved, is indeed noteworthy. Walpole consciously, or not, had taken the clue from Swift and Prior (2) in making his octosyllabics a light and suitable vehicle for poetry neither directly comic or humorous, nor directly or seriously romantic. But his discriminating use of anapaestic measures, or if one prefers it, his mixing of anapaestic feet with iambic feet, at the time when he practised it, in his century is indeed interesting. Prior and Dyer had greatly contributed to make their contemporaries feel the charm of this measure, which for a time, was looked upon as not much better than doggerel, jingling measure, or « tumbling verse ». Yet from the dates (3) it appears that neither Anstey (4) with his *New Bath Guide*, nor Percy with his *Reliques* (5) could have given new hints to Walpole as to the possibilities of this measure, in its lighter capacities at least. The numerous departures from the common ballad measure in some of the Ballads of the Collection (6) were a good antidote to the regular sing-song of the XVIII th century ballad style, or even the hard and monotonous regularity of any iambic measures, couplet, or blank verse.

Anstey's masterful treatment of anapaestic feet, both continuous, or with the admixture of iambuses might indeed have impressed Walpole who had waxed quite en-

was a noble wight. Aug. 8,1772. — 1. *The Three Vernons*, and previously the piece *Seed of poetry and rhyme*. — 2. *Countess Temple appointed poet-laureate* June. — 3. 1763(3 and 4.). — 1766. — 5. 1765-1766. — 6. *Sir Patrick Spens* for instance. Cf. Saintsbury. *History of Prosody*, vol. II, p. 526.

thusiastic over Anstey's performance. The measure pleased him, and he used it with the greatest felicity (1).

Another cadence in which he seems to have been equally successful, is iambic verse with initial truncation. It is very probable that reminiscences from *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, and The *Tempest* were the influences at work on Walpole (2).

To this variety of metres corresponds an almost equal variety in the treatment of the measures themselves. Of

1. Cf. unmixed and mixed anapaests.
T'other day | with a beau | tiful frown | on her brow.
To the rest | of the Gods | said the Ve | nus of Stowe
What a fuss | is here made | with that arch | just erect | ed (unmixed).
Can your shrine | any long | er with gar | land be dressed
« To Princess Amelia at Stowe » (*Lett.* VII, 396).
What a rout | do you make | for a poor | single kiss ! (unmixed)
I seized — it is true — and I ne'er | shall repent it » (mixed)
(*Song*).

« Oh for Love | we're all rea | dy ver | y true » (two iambuses)
[*The Advice*].

The measure is often used with feminine endings
The bus iness of wo | man dear Chlo-e is plea | sure
And by love | ever y fair | one her minutes should mea | sure
[*The Advice*].

« And with lips | that would make | folly char | ming »([*To Lady C.*,1778])

This line is cross rhyming with :
« To make | all those ar | rows more har | ming »
And again *Verses written to Cœlia*, avril 1750.
« Cœlia now | had comple | ted some fif | ty campaigns »

2. By | these pre | sents be | it known
To all | who bend | before | our throne
Fays | and fai | ries, elves | and sprites
Beaute | ous dames | and gal | lant knights.
That | we Ob | eron | the grand etc... [*Countess Temple*]

Where | do wit | and Mem | ory dwell ?
Where | is fan | cy's favourite cell ?
Where | does judg | ment hold | her court ?
[*Portrait of Mme Du Deffand*].

The Three Vernons are | in the same measure :
See | she blus | hes, Love | presumes.

course his couplet is generally regular with a rhythmical succession of iambic feet and a sharp break at the ordinary place of the hemistich (1) ; it is the same with his octosyllabic verse, the iambic rhythm and cadence of which are generally strongly preserved (2). To the anapaestic measure mixed or pure, Walpole did ample justice.

He follows the precept given by Cowper (3) ; he never seems to force a syllable into « his feet, nor does his verse hobble or drag along or make sudden jerks forward. » All of which defects are the bane of anapaestics, if they are intended to be thoroughly good.

His verse, however, has more than the smooth, easy, and varied flow, which a good ear, and a great command of rhythm and the resources of the language, can impart ; run-on verse (4), feminine-endings and alliteration are often resorted to as (5) a means of varying the metre. Walpole's verse even shows, here and there, the « beau-

1. See beginning of *Card to Lady Blandford.*

Where silver Thames from Twitnam's emerald meads
To Teddington his winding current leads ;
Where at one obelisk, three highways meet etc...

2. He was evidently quite alive to the value of the strength of the accent in English. — 3. Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody,* vol. II, p. 433.

4. Run on verse : with octosyllabics

When Carlo, with such looks expressed
His virgins, that her vot'ries feel
Emotions etc. . . . . (*Beauties*)

With iambics with initial truncation

. . . . . and lovers of the game
Of Cribbage. . . . . (*Card to Lady Blandford*).

With iambics :

. . . . who from your feeling draws
All the rewards. . . . . .
(*Prologue to the Mysterious Mother*).

5. Alliteration is not an uncommon feature of Walpole's verse ; it is

tiful negligence of a gentleman », for irregularities are not rare, and the poor quality of his rhymes especially (1) is the worst feature of his versification. That he could rhyme in a felicitous manner when wanted or when the impulse was on him is a fact, but it often seems that the « shackles » of the rhyme sat as heavy on Walpole as they did on much greater poets than he was (2) ; the quality of his blank verse, as we see it in his tragedy, shows that rhyme was perhaps unconsciously a burden which he bore rather impatiently.

Moreover, whereas his poems give the impression of desultory and incomplete achievements, his tragedy, is the outcome of a well defined purpose and much painstaking industry. He liked the drama, and stage craft had great attraction for him.

Poetry then, in the broad and usual meaning of the word, had not helped Walpole, as it did Halifax, to enter into high office ; it had not helped him to win for himself much literary reputation. It was not, then, in the ordinary

not however a very frequent characteristic, though conspicuous on some occasions. Cf. in octosyllabics especially.

The *Epilogue to Tamerlane* is full of alliterations, some of them striking. For. inst. these lines :

> But *l*aws and *l*iberties are *tr*ifling *tre*asures
> He *th*reatens *th*at grave property your *pl*easures.

1. Charm and form ; eye and purity [*Beauties.*]

Dreaded and succeeded ; Capuchin and again ; Expire and fryar [*Ep. Tamerlane.*]

Pattern and Katherine. [*Ep. Mrs Clive.*]

Though he generally rhymes for the ear and not for the eye, such poor rhymes as « path » and « death » ; « rove » and « love » ; « full » and « dull » (*Epistle*) may be found. — 2. He was well aware of the importance of rhyme as well as of prosody and language in general. Glover's *Medea* has a « quantity of iambics and trochaics that scarce speak English and know no rhyme ». *Lett.*, V, 136.

walks of poetry, that he attempted the only really serious effort he ever made.

Political satire or eloquence, or party feeling were after 1750 rather seldom expressed by him in his poetry ; such feelings however found their medium later in dramatic form, a method which H. Brooke with his *Gustavus Vasa* (1736), and Voltaire still more recently, had introduced.

Dramatic poetry was a subject on which he had still more attentively reflected than on other kindred subjects. So once, if once only, the lusty zest he had for the drama, and still more the romantic and Gothic inclinations which lay dormant in him, bore him through the completion of an important literary work.

Walpole who had interesting and consistent ideas on the drama, wrote in 1768 a tragedy, the *Mysterious Mother*, the real value of which it may be interesting to ascertain.

IV

WALPOLE AS A TRAGIC POET

I

WALPOLE'S VIEWS, THEORIES AND CRITICISMS ON DRAMATIC ART

If Walpole's criticism on poetry is interesting, his criticism on the drama is still more so. He was a gentleman and a playgoer and he made his greatest poetical effort in the drama.

However rigorous our judgment may be on the French tragedy of the eighteenth century (with of course, the exception of Voltaire's plays) (1), it compares favourably with the specimens of classical tragedy during the same period in England. From Addison's *Cato*, praised by Voltaire (2) to Hoole's *Cleonice*, (3) there had been a constant decline. John Home's *Douglas* was the only play that could be set on a level with Shakespeare's works in the favour of the public (4) both at Drury Lane and at Covent Garden. Otherwise, farce and melodrama then competed successfully with Shakespeare on the stage.

1. For example : Piron's *Callisthenes*, etc. Cf. Millar. *Op. cit.*, 221. — 2. In an epistle dedicatory to Bolingbroke, prefaced to *Brutus*, Voltaire's tragedy. Cf. *Œuvres Complètes*, II, 311, Paris. 1885. — 3. Millar. Cf. *Op. cit.* : Motley's *Antiochus*, 1721. etc... see the whole list. — 4. J. Genest.

Walpole's views on dramatic art, his appreciations of authors, especially, have, like the rest of his literary criticism, which cannot be neglected (1), been scattered throughout all his various works (2), his letters principally. In some of them (3), his thoughts have such a compact and complete form that they have been gathered under the title of « Thoughts on Tragedy », as a companion set to a short essay of his : « Thoughts on Comedy » (4).

When he began to write both « On Comedy » about July 13. 1777; (« On Tragedy » nov. 8. 1777), comedy (5) had begun to flourish again, but tragedy, in spite of Home's *Douglas*, was sinking down into the above mentioned decay (6). *Douglas*, being moreover the work of a Scotchman, could not be looked upon with very great favour by Walpole, who disliked Scotchmen (7). When Walpole criticized the literature of « this our Augustan age » as (8) he calls it, it was no doubt tragedy, which more than anything else he had in his mind : Thomson's *Tancred* and Glover's *Boadicea*, *Medea* etc. In Walpole's own circle, this view of the all too real decadence of tragedy was no doubt the view commonly taken (8). Mrs. Clive in a lively after-piece (9) had expressed it,

Short Account of the English Stage. — 1. D'Israeli : *Miscellanies of Literature*, Paris, 1840, 36-37, note 1. — 2. Prefaces to the *Castle of Otranto*, to the *Historic Doubts*, to the *Mysterious Mother*, etc. — 3. Some of his Letters to Jephson. From Feb. 24, 1775. — 4. Cf. *Works*, vol. II, 305-315. 1775-1776. — 5. In prose : *The Good-natured Man*, 1768 ; *She stoops to Conquer*, 1773, *The Rivals*, 1775, *The School for Scandal* 1778. Walpole however was never very enthusiastic, even about the best of these comedies. As to Cumberland's comedies (1775) one must not expect Walpole to be diverted by them. *Lett.*, IX, 128. — Cf. Sheridan's *Critic*, 1779. — 6. Walpole owned, however that *Douglas* exceeded Home's other plays. especially the *Siege of Aquileia*, *Lett.*, IV, 369. — 7. *Lett.*, VIII, 184. — 8. Cf. *The Cor.*, II, p. 22. — 9. *The Rehearsal or Bays in Petticoats*, 1750,

and Bentley, Walpole's friend, had deplored the dullness of contemporary tragedy (1).

> With Milton, Epic drew its latest breath,
> Since Shakespeare, Tragedy put us to death.

The poor condition of English tragedy could not, and did not then escape Walpole's notice (2), yet according to him, the difficulty of writing a good tragedy was not so great as that of writing a good comedy (3). For this deplorable state of things, the public had only to thank themselves, because in dramatic authors you find a tendency to pander to the present popular taste, to the level of the audience (4).

It is for this reason that Walpole does not like the dramatic authors of his time, in particular (5). He « could not bear » the modern poetry of *Tancred and Sigismunda*, « the new play of Thomson's to which the town flocks. These refiners of the purity of the stage and of the incorrectness of English verse are most woefully insipid... I had rather have written the most absurd lines in Lee (6) ». Walpole, a Methuselah, in his memory of the stage (7), « wondered how the town could hear with patience the stuff we have had, he says, for these fifty years » (8). Yet, notwithstanding this disdain, Walpole kept an attentive eye on what was taking place on the London stage. *The Battle of Hastings*, one of Cumberland's dramas, is, he said, the « child of a feeble parent » and

quoted by Lounsbury. *Shakespeare as a dramatic artist* p. 207. — 1. Cf. *Poetical Epistle*. Saint James Magazine, vol. II, p. 5. — 2. Cf. *Postscript. to M. M.* (p. 101) The end : « The theatric genius lay dormant after Shakespeare »... — 3. *Walpoliana*, I., 3. — 4. *Walpoliana*, I, *Ibid* p. 42. — 5. *Lett.*, IX, 128 — 6. *Lett.*, Feb. 1775 to Jephson. *Toynbee Sup.*,vol. I, p. 256. — 7. *Lett.*, Feb. 1.1775 to Ossory. — 8. *Lett.*, Feb. 18.1775,

the letter which contains this disparaging notice, again shows his disdain of contemporary drama...

Setting Shakespeare apart, the English dramatic authors, whom Walpole seems to know best and value most, belong nearly all of them to the times immediately preceding his own. Dryden's *All for Love* (1678), *Don Sebastian* (1690), at least some scenes of it, and Young's *Revenge* (1721) are ranked among « the tragedies of signal merit » which he « admires very much (1) ». Dryden waked « theatric genius » with some « bold and glorious but irregular and often ridiculous flights ». Nicholas Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, 1703, (at least four acts of it), he also considered « very good » (2), and was even able to quote it from memory (3) But *Jane Shore* of the same author, is, perhaps, « our best play » (4); it is a perfect tragedy, both in conduct and language (5), though not a capital one. Southerne, Walpole also appreciates. « There are, he says, parts of *Oroonoko* and the *Fatal marriage*, worthy a disciple of Shakespeare (6). » There was in Southerne « a ray of Nature and Shakespeare (7) ». What he liked in Home's *Douglas* was that there were genuine nature, and interesting descriptions of the manners of the country (8). And he remarked about this that there was « little of nature in the manners of both Greek and Romans », the plays of whom, by the way, he completely ignores, though he must have known some of them. French tragedies of the XVII th Century, he had, on the contrary, studied with some care (9). As he did not like French drama, considering that there was

to Mason. — 1. Author's *Postscript* M. M. — 2. *Ibid.* — 3. *Fair Penitent.* act. II, sc. II., Dec. 14.1739. — 4. *Ibid.* Walpole was favourably impressed by his placid, pleasing dignity: See *Author's postscript. M. M.* Otway is also favourably mentioned. — 5. *Lett.*, X, 157. — 6. *Ibid.* — 7. *Author's postscript to M. M.* on Lee, Young, Hughes and Fenton, Walpole's judgment is not unfavourable. — 8. *Lett.*, XI, 369. — 9. Cf. *Thoughts on Tra-*

in it « little or no action » (1), he was anxious « not to deny just praise to Corneille and Racine » (2). Their tragedies, he noticed, were « not dramatic » (3). In them, « no pity and terror moved by incident and action » ; and on this want of terror, Walpole particularly insisted (4). But though they did not contain « what an Italian, an Englishman, or a German expects in a drama, real action and frequent incident », Walpole made it a point, to appreciate what was peculiar to the French drama, and to be alive to its particular interest « created by perplexity of mental conflict and situation » (5).

This might perhaps have made up for the poverty of incident, but tragedy itself, as a kind of literary work, especially as the French understood it, did not tally with Walpole's ideals ; « a general objection to tragedy, he says, is an unnatural elevation of Nature..... sentiments exaggerated, amplified by the expression » (6). However when « mental conflicts and situations » are strong, they impart to the French tragedy such dramatic power of their own, that Walpole declares himself highly satisfied. « Johnson had the bad taste of preferring Smith's poetic, but insipid and undramatic *Phædra and Hippolytus* to Racine's *Phèdre*, « the finest tragedy in my opinion of the French theatre » (7) *Phèdre* is « exquisite, *Britannicus* is admirable » (8). Among Corneille's plays *Rodogune* is set above all the others (9); among Voltaire's tragedies *Alzire*, *Mahomet* and *Sémiramis*, were his favourites (10). There were three plays he especially disliked : Racine's *Mithridate*, *Iphigénie* (11) and Voltaire's *Zaïre*; puerility,

gedy. Letter to President Hénault. *Walpoliana*, I, 46. — 1. *Walpoliana*, I, 46. — 2. *Ibid.* — 3. *Ibid.* — 4. *Prologue to M. M.* — 5. *Walpoliana* I., 47. 6. *Lett.*, X, p. 159. — 7. *Lett.*, XI, 402, to Mason. — 8. *Toynb. Sup.*, *I*, 256. — 9. *Ibid.* — 10. *Ibid.* — 11. *Ibid.*, 239-253. — *Ibid.*, 218-219.

want of adherence to nature were the reasons he gave for his prejudice against these three plays. That he should have disliked *Zaïre* is somewhat astonishing, for, with *Alzire*, *Mahomet* and *Semiramis* it usually ranks among the plays of Voltaire which more or less violently attack fanaticism (1). They also showed (2) « le désir du bonheur des hommes, la haine de l'oppression et de l'injustice » all things in which Walpole most heartily concurred (3), and which he was soon to express by a work of his own.

But one man summed up the drama for Walpole. Before all the others he « preferred Shakespeare to every man » (4) ; he « set him first and alone ». This is not blind idolatry or the effect of national pride on the part of Walpole, who knew Shakespeare well (5), and was alive to his most glaring defects. Shakespeare according to him seems to have turned Holinshed and Stowe into verse and scenes, as fast as he could write (6), but here and elsewhere, he certainly took « no pains to adjust a plan ». If there is art in *Othello* and *Macbeth* (7), it seems to have been by chance. Every now and then his divine genius flashed upon particular scenes, and made them immortal (8)... though the rest may be very defective... « Nature has stamped these scenes with her own impression. » Some of his « spectres » even, are infinitely superior to

1. Cf. Brunetière. *Epoques du Théâtre français*, Paris, 1896, p. 180. — 2. Voltaire's *Preface to Alzire*, 1736. — 3. A striking opinion of Walpole is « Voltaire a plus de génie que d'art. »

4. *Lett.* To Jephson. Feb. 1775. *Lett. Toyn Sup.*, vol. I, p. 252 and 253. — 5. His theory about « the Winter Evening's Tale », as he persisted in calling the *Winter's Tale*, shows more than ordinary acquaintance with the works of Shakespeare and makes him (Cf. Lounsbury : *Shakespeare and Voltaire*) « the first who started that long line of absurd theories connected with Shakespeare's life and writings ». Though absurd to us the theory showed Walpole's ingenuity. — 6. *Toyn. Sup.*, I, 253. — 7. *Ibid.* — 8. The scene of Constance, Arthur, Hubert in King John. —

all the correct elegance of Racine (1), and he has another kind of sublime which no man ever possessed but he, and this is his art of « dignifying a vulgar or trivial expression »; and Voltaire's intelligence is perfectly inadequate to comprehend the beauty of it. In those long letters which he wrote to the playwright Jephson, Walpole gave him (2) the advice of « touching the passions by the pathetic familiar » : he means the study of Shakespeare's strokes of Nature. As to the language, Shakespeare « could do what he would with it ». Now, this appreciation of Shakespeare rests on a sound basis, and is perfectly genuine and sincere. One might have imagined that the man who wrote the *Mysterious Mother* would have — supposing he knew them — preferred some of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Indeed, it seems that he did know some of them, but comparing Shakespeare's with Beaumont's Fletcher's and Massinger's plays, he notices that Shakespeare has something more than they have, and that is *taste* (3). So he has a better appreciation of Shakespeare than many of the men of the XVIII th Century. Sir Thomas Hanmer's alterations and « emendations » of Shakespeare seem to him perfectly ridiculous (4).

It is when Shakespeare is « most » simple and natural « that Walpole looks upon him as being superior to all mankind ». « Seized with enthusiasm » whenever he speaks of « our first of men », Walpole mentions the passages which seem to him « real texts and out of the Book of

1. Cf. *Ibid*, p. 254. Lady Percy's speech. act. II, Scene III. *Second part of Henry VI.* Exquisitely sublime and pathetic too. — 2. *Ib*, p. 254. —3. Gray who, (*Progress of Poesy*) associated Shakespeare's name, with Milton's and Dryden's may have helped to foster and reinforce this admiration. — 4. *Lett.*, X, 155, 1777; it is mainly a question of style.— In 1745 Cassio « almost damned in a fair wife » is altered into « almost

nature » (1). For it is not only a question of style, however important it may have been, in the opinion of a man, who though « metaphorical syle » did not please him, wanted to invent a suitable medium for tragedy (2).

Enthusiastic admiration for Shakespeare's « divine plays » (3) was so great in Walpole, that he deliberately overlooked some of the faults, which critics of his time considered most grievous, and he would have it, that they were beauties. Hence his support of the intermixing of comic and tragic elements in a play. Now, notwithstanding Shakespeare's unquestionable success, before eighteenth century audiences, critics always contended that mixing « comic stuff with tragic sadness » (4) was a grave violation of propriety. Walpole's was with Johnson's (5) the only voice raised in favour of such practice (6). Now, national pride may have something to do with this attitude of a man whose mind was not biassed by enthusiasm, for « Shakespeare, said he, somewhere (7), has written some whole plays that are as bad as any of our present writers ». But Shakespeare is none the less « the most beautiful genius to which nature has given birth » (8). Though in his serious criticism (in his *Works* and in some letters written in earnest) there is no definite assertion of the inferiority of the French theatre in general, the notion of the superiority of Shakespeare is prevalent everywhere (9).

damned in a fair phiz ». « What a tragic word » indignantly cries Walpole, « and what sense ! » — 1. Hotspur's mockeries of Glendover, Macbeth's account of the two grooms killed, Henry VI'.s image of the Cabin boy in « a night so rude ». To these, may be added from the Prologue to the *M. M.* : Hamlet's spectre treading the midnight round and Banquo's issue crowned in vision. — 2. For inst. Jephson. — 3. *Let.*, VIII, p. 141. — 4. Milton's Preface to *Samson*. — 5. Lounsbury, *Shakespeare as a dramatic Artist*, p. 156. — 6. Second Preface to *Otranto*. — 7. *Let.*, X, 329. — 8. Lounsbury, *Shakespeare and Voltaire*. — 9. *Ibid.*

The spell of dramatic composition, the pleasure of writing for the stage, had always made themselves felt among Walpole's circle ; yet Walpole, we remarked, did not make any serious attempt at Comedy. Once, however he did compose something of the kind (1) and it was really a most unpretending sort of play. In 1773 (Cf. *Short Notes on my Life*, LI) he wrote *Nature will prevail* « a moral entertainment » which he sent anonymously to Mr. Colman, the manager of Covent Garden. « He was much pleased with it, writes Walpole but thinking it too short for a farce, pressed to have it enlarged, which I would not take the trouble to do for so slight and extempore a performance... »

Colman's appreciation of the play is quite to the credit of the distinguished playwright, and the attitude of the latter quite characteristic of his desultory nonchalance. And why should he have taken the trouble to enlarge upon the clever little sketch he had written, since (*Shor Notes*, LII) in June 1778 « was acted *Nature will prevai* at the little theatre, in the Haymarket, with success » ? Moreover, short one-act pieces were quite the fashion in those times, and such as it was, this comedy was the very sort of play bluette « an amateur playwright » might like to write. Moreover, as it is « a moral entertainment », full of fantasy and even of supernatural element, it may be looked upon as a sort of « masque » which H. Walpole, « the gentleman usher » par exellence, turned « master of the revels » for the nonce, presented to his contemporaries.

The sketch is short and the subject so simple, so trifling, that the author has to fall back upon his wit and

1. In prose.

his « vis comica » in order to be really entertaining : wit and « vis comica » however, though they exist are not exceedingly great. The plot is very slight. In a desert island under mild skies and with (we are left to suppose), abundance of commodities and comfort, two personages find themselves shut up prisoners : Their names must be taken as being symbolical : Current is a talkative body who pities himself because, being such a gossip and tale-bearer he has not a soul to whom to communicate his thoughts and feelings except Padlock his companion, a fellow full of circumspection, who « never imparted a tittle to him, but which way the wind was » and never gives him so much as a straight opinion or a piece of his own mind. The Fairy Almodine who rules over this island appears to Current, but Current must not tell any one, above all Padlock, that he has seen her : his life depends on his keeping his secret. This secret he cannot keep : he imparts it not to Padlock, but to the Echo. Almodine temporarily punishes him with the loss of his hearing. Padlock who is not only circumspect but full of cunning, deceit and treachery takes advantage of his physical infirmity when, having met a young girl, Finette who also, by the will of the Fairy has been shipwrecked Current makes love to her and offers to marry her, which she readily accepts. « A vain endeavour to correct Nature says Almodine (*Works* II p. 304) has cured me of presumption. » She dismisses Padlock telling him that good sense has only given edge to the hardness of his heart ; and Current who is « more fool than knave », she keeps in the island with his Finette, for Current with his foolish temper is not fit to live among men.

This trifle may have been liked and indeed favourably received « when it came out ». It is quite in keeping with

the moral and sentimental tone of many comedies of the day and might please the audience. The play shows at least one thing, that is Walpole's disgust of « caution, reserve, suspicion, cunning, self interest, treachery » ; loquacious people, may be fools, but then in a drawing-room cautious people are not the most interesting. Last of all, the fantastical use of the marvellous with the pleasant fairy Almodine is quite characteristic of Walpole, who here, unites fantasy and matter of fact a tendency which he made so conspicuous in the *Castle of Otranto*. All this shows that the stage never lost its attraction upon Walpole. So he was not only led to criticize dramatic productions generally, but also those of his friends, and this not only after, but also before, he had written a play himself. Gray in years gone by, thought Walpole too lenient about his *Agrippina* (1) which Gray himself said was « all in figures and mere poetry instead of nature and the language of real passion» ; but when giving his opinion on *Pausanias*, a play begun by West (2), Walpole indicates plainly what he likes and does not like ; his remarks point to an unquestionable sense of stage-craft, which his frequentation of the London playhouses could not but increase. As he tried his hand at nearly every kind of literary writing, and had lately successfully written a work of pure imagination (3), which Warburton held eminently suitable for a drama, it is no wonder that soon after, on Dec. 25, 1766 (4), he should have begun a tragedy. To « tread as Addison had done (5) in sublime and classic fetters » was not what Walpole contemplated, but rather « to follow in the path of Nature and Shakespeare ». In the most « accidental manner », we are told,

1. *The Corr.* II, 62. — 2. May 10, 1741. — 3. *Otranto*, 1764 on Warburton's opinion, see *Let.* XI, 112-113. Jan. 27, 1780. — 4. *Short notes*, XLIX. — 5. Au-

it happened that Walpole's play « conformed to the mechanical » rule of the three unities. This was not what he was striving after ; yet, as it might impart additional respectability to a play, the plot of which was very objectionable, and as, moreover, he meant this to be a genuine tragedy, not a « gross and barbarous production » (1), it is not rash to suppose that Walpole was not displeased with this « conformity ».

Walpole's tragedy was never acted.

This supercilious and touchy man « could not think of the stage, he believed from pride (2) ». Yet, he did not miss an opportunity of experiencing the pleasant but nerve racking sensations attending the staging of a play. He felt them, as it were, by proxy, with comfortable discretion, when he superintended the production of Jephson's play, *The Count of Narbonne* which was professedly a dramatized version of the *Castle of Otranto*, and which, in more than one passage (3), bears a strong resemblance to *The Mysterious Mother*.

thor's *Postscript*. M.M. — 1. *Postscript M. M.*, P. 101. — 2. *Let.* May 11, 1769, to Mason. — 3. Arnold Latt., *Robert Jephson*, 78-80.

V

THE MYSTERIOUS MOTHER

« It is useless to criticize what nobody reads » Johnson is supposed to have said (cf. Augustine Birrell : *Selected Essays*, London, n. d., p. 50), but it was only a « boutade » applied to his own *Irene* and Johnson himself has often acted contrary to his own advice in his *Lives of the Poets*.

« *The Mysterious Mother* : a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play... the last tragedy in our language... »

Byron : Preface to *Marino Faliero*.

WALPOLE AS A DRAMATIST

The mysterious Mother

Some of Walpole's acquaintances, who did not even care for his light verse, acknowledged the interest and value of his *Mysterious Mother*.

« His little jeux d'esprit in prose (for he terribly failed in verse) are jewels, and perhaps, above them all his papers in the *World*. When I say that he failed in verse I must except that striking play *The Mysterious Mother*, which in a very original vein is full of dramatic genius and of picturesque effect (1). »

Lord Byron in his Preface to *Marino Faliero* enthusiastically expressed extremely high opinion of this tragedy of Walpole, *The Mysterious Mother*.

Both in his *Lives of the Novelists* (2) and in his *Essay on the Drama* (3) Walter Scott has spoken highly of Walpole in general and of *The Mysterious Mother* in particular. According to the division made by Scott, when Walpole turned playwright, it was during what Scott calls « the fourth era of our dramatic history, when commenced a return to a better taste introduced by the celebrated actor Garrick ». Scott's encomium (4) has a very definite and direct form.

1. Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*. London, 1814, VIII, 526. — 2. *Lives of the Novelists*. — 3. *The Prose Works* of Sir Walter Scott, Bart, vol. VI. Edinburgh (A. and C. Black) 1881, pp. 377 and 109. — 4. Would

« The tragic Muse, he says, appeared to linger behind the taste of the age, and still used the constrained and mincing measure which she had been taught in the French school. Hughes, Cumberland and other men of talent appeared in her service, but their model remained as imperfect as ever, and it was not till our own time, that any bold efforts were made to restore to tragedy that truth and passion without which declamation is only rant and impertinence. Horace Walpole however, showed what might be done by adopting a more manly and vigorous style of composition ; and Home displayed the success of a more natural current of passion. » Of Home's dramatic merits, however, W. Scott has little else to say when he has praised the strong manner in which Home has expressed « a passion which finds a response in every bosom », that is, « the warmth and purity of maternal and filial affection ». But when mentioning Horace Walpole's tragedy he was much more explicit and expressed his praises much more strongly. « H. Walpole (Scott says), choosing a theme, not only totally unfit for representation but from which the mind shrinks in private study, treated it as a man of genius free from the trammels of habit and pedantry. His characters in *The Mysterious Mother* do not belong to general classes, but have bold, true and individual features ; and the language approaches that of the first age of the English Drama. »

Of course, we would not advise any one to take up *The Mysterious Mother* when coming quite fresh from the *Rehearsal*, or attending a performance of the *Critic* more especially: but what tragedy could stand such an unjust trial? Would

it not even be possible to trace through the poetical romances of Byron and Scott some suggestions from or even reminiscences, not only of

Hamlet or even *Othello* come out of it successfully ?

Macaulay (1) has a short and ready way of ignoring Byron's encomium on *The Mysterious Mother*, and of summarily disposing of it, which is rather unpleasant as well as unfair. « I said nothing about Lord Byron's Criticism on Walpole because I thought it like most of his Lordship's criticism, below refutation. On the drama Lord Byron wrote more nonsense than on any subject. He wanted to have restored the unities. His practice proved as unsuccessful, as his tragedy was absurd. His admiration of *The Mysterious Mother* was of a piece with his thinking Gifford and Rogers greater poets than Wordsworth and Coleridge. »

Walpole, owing to his personal taste, was aware of the fascinating power of mystery ; a plot as impenetrable as possible, a problem which would seem hardly capable of being solved, the outcome of which should be concealed until the last scene, all these things are intended to provide tension and excitement of a pleasing kind, though in itself the subject is painful. Thus, by degrees our memory is impressed and our emotion is greatly quickened. Alluding to his tragedy, Walpole, in one of his fits of modesty, says that (2) he was « conscious of many defects in the execution, as well as in the subject » ; nor adds he, « though I have sometimes written verses, did I ever think that I was born a poet ». Yet, he admits readily enough that, after having vainly tried comedy, he thought himself possessed with some talent for tragedy (3). Several times in his readings (4) Walpole was on the look out

the *Castle of Otranto* but also the *Mysterious Mother* ?— 1. Cf. Trevelyan : *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, vol. I, p. 334. — 2. April 16, 1781. — 3. To Jephson. *L. Toyn. Sup.*, I, 248. — 4. Among Vertot's works'

for new subjects, and he thought of writing either « on the fruitful canvas of Don Carlos », or on the History of Sir Thomas More. He was never able, however, to find a second story that pleased him. Fastidious and lazy as he was in some ways, it is most likely that he wanted a story precisely suiting his most exacting taste, and at the same time, one which would not save him the interesting trouble of arranging the plot in a suitable manner. In accordance with his temperament he wanted to feel some degree of enthusiasm for the theme selected. He « could not resist the impulse of adapting... » (1) the subject « to the scene », and *The Mysterious Mother* was written as quickly as any of his other productions. Indeed, Walpole who had a mind for the discovery of strange occurrences must have found the story quite to his taste.

It seems that « when very young », such a not particularly edifying story, had deeply struck his fancy (2). It had come to his ears as an example of great crime, which had caused incredible pangs of remorse in the culprit, and these had greatly impressed him. Curiously minded reader as he was, he could not but meet with some similar stories, and as early as 1753 (3) he had somewhere noted that an occurence partly similar had happened to Ninon de Lenclos and one of her natural sons, the Chevalier de Villiers. Ninon, who recognized the young man, told him the truth, and the matter ended there, but the rash and « abashed young man took his life. » Far more

T. Sup., I, 191-192. — 1. Cf. *The Mysterious Mother*, a Tragedy, Dublin, 1791. Postscript, p. 93. The play, H. W. hints (*Sh. N.*, XLIX) was begun on Dec. 25.65, finished March 15.1768 but « laid aside for several months when he was in Paris ». In May 1781 H. W. published (*Sh. N.* L III) the *M. M.* in order to put a stop to a pirated edition. — 2. *M. M. Ibid.*, p. 94. — 3. Cf. *The World*, N° 28, July 12, 1753. — See also : *Tom Jones*.

dramatic was the previous story told by Archbishop Tillotson. No wonder that Walpole should have made use of it. In this case the woman had taken advantage of an assignation proposed by her son with a « gentle maiden », but, moved by a much more criminal passion, « she had actually kept the assignation herself » without discovering her identity. The story, however, did not end tragically as it does in the play. The son, it is true, married his own daughter and sister; but being presumably happy, Archbishop Tillotson « charged the mother never to let them know what had happened. For herself, he bade her almost despair » (1). Stories of such incests had been current before (2) and six instances (3) at least could be reported. Present to the mind of every one, well-read in literature is, of course, the story of Œdipus. This theme as treated by Sophocles and others, has never been considered as unfit for the stage. Though the monstrosity of the other, mentioned by Walpole, is of a greater degree, yet, should it be entirely kept from the boards ? Everything depends on the way the subject is handled by the author, and on the condition of the minds of the audience. The latter, or rather public opinion, at large, was wholly unfavourable, though on one or two occasions (4), Walpole seems to have entertained some faint hopes of a performance. He could not but know that in

1. The story is supposed to have happened in the reign of King William, III, cf. Postscript., p. 96. *M. M.* — 2. Walpole mentions *The Novels of the Queen of Navarre*, vol. I, Nov. 30. See *Lett.*, VII, 199. — 3. Cf. D. Erskine. *Biographia*; Baker. *Biographia Dramatica.* London, 1812, 4 volumes, in-8°, vol. III, p. 65, *sqq.* art. *Mysterious Mother*; see also H. W's *Lett.*, VII, 305. — 4. Especially on April 15. 1768 (to Montagu) when being still under the excitement of having completed his tragedy he mentions, in a most supercilious and affectedly detached manner, how he would like to see it acted.

other times, among the Ancients (1), or even in England, in days not very far off, an audience would have most readily accepted it. He had no doubt (2) but a Grecian poet would have made no scruple of exhibiting it on the stage. The Elizabethans, most probably, might (3) not have shrunk from it. In fact, at a more recent period, English writers of the XVII[th] century did not ; since (4), a contemptible performance entitled *The Fatal Discovery* was actually brought before the public at Drury Lane in 1698. Still later, one Mr. Gould, in another worthless piece, printed posthumously, but never acted, *Innocence Distressed* or *The Royal Penitents*, treated a similar subject. It is impossible to know whether Walpole knew any of these works. They deserve however, some notice, for the subject which they treated, closely resembles that of *The Mysterious Mother* (5). The model afforded by these plays was indeed of the poorest. There are no indications (6) that the author relied in any way upon any Gothic feeling or appropriate scenery wherewith to impress the reader, nor are there any descriptive pas-

1. As he himself says cf. *Postscript*, p. 94. — 2. *Ibid.* — 3. Adultery is seldom exhibited or alluded to on the stage by Shakespeare ; something like incest, treated in the most severe manner in *Hamlet* seems to point to a special delicacy on the subject. — 4. Baker. *Ibid.*, p. 67, col. 2. — 5. *The Fatal Discovery* was printed in 1698. Genest, cf. *Some account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830*, 30 vol., 1832. Bath, vol. II, p. 142-143. No particular mention is made of the tragedy, except that it is scarce. In the Preface, Powell's retaliation on Dryden and its causes are only insisted on. George Powell, who wrote it, in this Preface to the reader attacks « the late famous piece of rhime viz. M[r]. Dryden's encomium upon the tragedy called *Heroic Love.* » He makes fun of Dryden, of his vanity, of his poetry, etc. : « With his long and laudable vanity, all true Drydenism, he gives the reader to understand that J. Dryden is the very father of the Muses, the source, fountain and original of poetry, nay, Apollo himself ». Yet the author has most of Dryden's defects, and none of his qualities. — 6. Beyond the following

sages written with a view to convey such an impression. No deep passions, no great questions are at stake. There is nothing in *The Fatal Discovery* but the bare plot which is as follows. Cornaro, a man of noble birth, after long absence, comes back to his mother who is at that time a widow. He falls in love with Eromene, a young girl who lives in the house. Despite his mother's strong objections, he marries her secretly and the next morning, he is told that this Eromene, now his wife is at the same time his sister, and his daughter (1). When in his turn he tells Eromene the awful secret, she cannot bear this terrible stroke of fortune and dies, leaving Cornaro in despair. A confidante explains rather clumsily the whole matter to Cornaro :

> .... You'd past an engagement with a young
> And foolish maid in th'house to meet that night ;
> Your father had made such another appointment,
> Which was by one discovered to your mother :
> And my unhappy Lady in her stead
> Resolv'd to meet her husband, but by accident
> She did mistake the room and came to you ;
> But, in the morning, slipping from her husband,
> (As she believ'd) for fear of a discovery,
> She met my Lord, just come from his intrigue ;
> And then, she found too late her fatal error.

The main point to be noted is that the mother had simply, some eighteen years ago, been the victim of a mistake. She believed she had to do with her husband, and not with her son. There is no voluntary and wilful guilt therein. It is not the same with the next play, which though perhaps more worthless than the first, con-

stage directions : in a garden, in a bed-room, in the hall. — 1. P. 41, act V, scene I. The explanation of this horrible mystery is given by the

tains some more dramatic elements, and to which consequently, *The Mysterious Mother* bears a closer resemblance. The plot of *Innocence Distressed* (1) has the same incestuous character. Duke Theodorus, Prince of Muscovy, has just returned in a similar manner after a long absence, during which he has been travelling, and at the wars. He has won much fame in having courageously defeated the Tartars. Then along with the Duke, the principal personages are : the Duchess, his mother ; Lady Seraphane, « a lady of quality and virtue » ; Adorissa « a young virtuous lady », and Mirabella her supposed mother. No sooner has Theodorus returned, than he falls in love with Adorissa, who lives at Court as the suivante of his mother, and this Adorissa he wishes to marry immediately. Hearing of this, the Duchess grows incensed and confused, and even faints twice. She opposes his purpose in the most violent manner. Adorissa, she assures him is not faithful to his love, she herself has been, she says, the witness of a secret meeting between Adorissa and another man. This leads to many intricacies in the plot, and to difficulties between the Duke and his betrothed. However a reconciliation soon takes place. Despairing of ever finding the Duchess tractable enough to consent to their union, deeming moreover her attitude quite strange, and unintelligible, they decide to marry secretly on the morrow. The chaplain of the castle blesses their union. But the wrathful Duchess grown desperate,

confidante of his mother. — 1. *Innocence Distressed or the Royal Penitents*, a tragedy written by the late Mr Gould. London, 1737. B. M. 161. l-70. Robert Gould (D. N. B. 228, XXII), d. 1709. Originally a servant of Charles-Earl of Dorset 1680 : « Love given over » : *Satirical poems.* « The Rival sisters, or the violence of Love » : 4°. London, 1696 — borrowed in a great measure from Shirley's *Maid's Revenge. The Royal Penitents*, London, 1739, published by subscription for the benefit of his daughter.

in order to prevent the consummation of the marriage, causes them both to be poisoned, and then poisons herself. The explanation of her attitude is given by the prude Seraphane, hitherto a rather unimportant personage, but who proves, after all, to have been the initial cause of the tragedy (1). She had been courted by the Duke before he left Moscow last ; she says : « he did solicit me,

> For such a favour as I dare not mention
> With courtship, vows and presents, though
> I still with flat denials, did return' em back.

The Duchess much enraged to hear of it, informed as she was by Seraphane, bade her appoint a place

> To meet him, which I did ; my own apartment ;
> The hour exactly twelve, the chamber dark,
> And not a word to pass on either side.
> For so her highness ordered, that she might,
> Calling for lights, surprise him. The Duchess plac'd
> Herself then to receive him, with intent,
> To reprimand him sharply, on conviction,
> For such licentious courses. Thus expecting
> His coming long (as she but informed me)
> Light fancies touch'd her breast, a warmth succeeded,
> Which, by insensible degrees, at last
> Ripened into desire.

Here the Duke entering and taking her for Seraphane « seized on her, with many an eager kiss » : while « unable to speak or to resist », « she permitted him to ruin her for ever. »

How stale and flat is the style of the play, this short

1. *Ibid.*, p. 56-57.

quotation shows, and yet, a good style was the only way to make such matter acceptable.

Walpole's subject was quite as hazardous and bold as the last one we have just seen.

He has placed his fable at the dawn of the Reformation. The passionate woman, the Countess of Narbonne herself, who doted upon her lord, with luxurious fancy as she confesses, tells, at the end of the tragedy, the reasons of her mysterious attitude, and explains what remote cause brought about the catastrophe. Speaking of her husband she says :

> ..... For eighteen months
> An embassy detained him from my bed ;
> A harbinger announc'd his return.
> Love dressed his image to my loving thoughts
> In all its warmest colours.

But the count was killed by a ferocious stag at bay, at the very moment, when he reached the precincts of this castle (1) and presented but « a bloody corse » to the horrified eyes of the Countess. Now, it seems, that on the evening of that day, the fateful 20th of September, the Countess had arranged the meeting which was to undo her in the end. A certain damsel Beatrice who attended the Countess,

> Whether too warmly pressed, or too officious
> To turn the current of my grief aside,

disclosed to the Countess the suit of her unhappy boy who had assigned to her a secret meeting for the next night. In order to upbraid her son for entertaining such thoughts at such a moment, the Countess made up her mind to

1. Act. I, scene III.

meet her son herself, in place of Beatrice. But instead of reproving him with severity, « guilt » she confesses later to him, rushed into my soul, — my fancy saw thee, thy father's image...

> Grief, disappointment, opportunity
> Raised such a tumult in my madding blood,
> I took the damsel's place. »

Her features were probably concealed by the darkness, and Edmund, her son, thought he was clasping young Beatrice in his arms. A daughter, « young Adeliza », was the fruit of that monstrous night.

Her soul full of contrary feelings, horrified by the action, unable to stand the presence of her son, the Countess banishes him from her sight, his having had an intrigue with Beatrice (1), on the night of his father's demise, being given out as the palpable reason of her decision. Was then, love, thought the young man, so black and unforgivable a crime, and his not having « turned from a willing girl to sing a requiem to one's father's soul » so unpardonable ? The Countess' heart, which seemingly (2) had never been too partial to her son, grew estranged. She called him « impious », and said he had « profaned his father's ashes (3) ». Yet, though dismissed, he continues to enjoy from his mother an ample provision which might have been denied to him. Everything, in fact, that belonged to Narbonne : castles, lordships, all inheritance being bequeathed by the « fond Count » his father to his wife.

But Edmund explains she takes no advantage of it.

> — to me, her hand
> Is bounteous, as her heart is cold (4).

1. As he supposes. — 2. Acte II, scene I. — 3. *Ibid.* — 4. *M. M.*

Now, after a long lapse of years, though he is forbidden to do so, and may, by this rash act « forfeit all his mother's bounties (1), » he comes back because he is weary of such a vagrant life (2).

Edmund. — I am weary, Florian,
Of such a vagrant life. Befits it me,
Sprung from a race of heroes, Narbonne's prince,
To lend my casual arm's approved valour
To quarrels, nor my country's nor my own ?
To stain my sword with random blood ! — I fought
At Buda' gainst the Turk — a holy war,
So was it deem'd — I smote the turban'd race :
Did zeal or did ambition nerve my blow ?
Or matter'd it to me, on Buda's domes
Whether the crescent or the cross prevailed ?
Meantime on alien climes I dissipated
Wealth from my subjects wrung, the peasant's tribute,
Earn'd by his toil. Meantime in ruin laid
My mould'ring castles — Yes, ye moss-grown walls !
Ye tow'rs defenceless ! — I revisit ye
Shame-stricken — Where are all your trophies now ?
Your thronged court, the revelry, the tumult,
That spoke the grandeur of my house, the homage
Of neighb'ring barons ? Thus did Thibalt, Raoul,
Or Clodomir, my brave progenitors,
Creep like a spy, and watch to thrid your gates
Unnotic'd ? No, with martial attributes,
With waving banners and enlivening fifes,
They bade your portal wide unfold its jaw,
And welcome them and triumph.

How will he be received by his mother surrounded as she is (3), by a host of priests ? However he does not

1. Act. II, scene I. — 2. *M. M.*, p. 27. — 3. *M. M , Ibid.*

meet her ; hovering for some time near a convent where he had gained admittance, he has made the acquaintance of a young lady who is kept there, Adeliza, the Countess's ward, a most lovely, exquisite, and bashful girl. The Countess wishing to match her nobly,

> Her guardian Abbess
> Admits such visitors as claim her notice
> By worthy bearing and convenient splendour (1),

and may eventually prove suitable suitors. Adeliza's charms have won Edmund's heart and he wishes to marry her. Out of pure spite and, precisely because he suspects the truth and guesses that Adeliza is the Countess's daughter, begot in some unlawful and perhaps monstrous manner, an arch villain, Father Benedict, marries them. When she hears of it, it is too late for the Countess to prevent the marriage. It is when she is apprised of it, that she reveals the truth to her son « I am, she tells him (2), The mother of thy daughter, sister. wife. »

Adeliza swoons away, her mother the Countess kills herself.

> Countess. — Be that swoon eternal!
> Now, let her know the rest. She is thy daughter.
> Fruit of that monstrous night !
> Edm. — Infernal woman (*draws his dagger*).
> My dagger must repay a tale like this !
> Blood so distempered — no — no, I must not strike —
> I dare not punish what you dar'd commit,
> Coun, (seeing the dagger). —
> Give me the steel, my arm will not recoil.
> Thus, Edmund, I revenge thee ! *Stabs herself.*

Leaving his betrothed bride to the care of the nuns among whom she must take the veil, Edmund goes away

1. *M. M.*, p. 29. — 2. *M. M.*, v, p. 40.

to the wars, with his friend, Florian, wishing for a speedy death.

Extremely hasardous it might have been, in the time of Walpole, to risk a performance of his play, because towards 1770 « the delicacy of the day was frequently carried to a ridiculous degree (1) ». The time when ladies could sit with a mask throughout the most licentious performances, or (2) read aloud unblushingly the novels of Mrs Aphra Behn, were already far off, and manners, and language especially, were undergoing a change (3) of which most people were hardly conscious.

The plot required careful treatment, all the more as Walpole made the character of the female culprit not only that of a guilty but also of a passionate and remorseful woman. The character of Racine's Phèdre (4), the hopeless and overmastering passion under which she labours, almost in spite of herself, all these things were not lost upon Walpole. The relentless doom, the physical exhaustion (5) and distraction of the mind (6), which attend the fate of *The Mysterious Mother* are all characteristics of Racine's heroine, or of her condition. In fact, Phedre'scrime is not so great or repulsive as that of the Countess for, after all,

1. Baker's *ibid.*, p. 67, col. I. — 2. And Cf. Walter Scott's. *Prose Works.* — 3. *The Life and letters of Lady Sarah Lennox* edited by the Countess of Ilchester and Lord Starwordale. London, 1901, vol. II, appendix B. 290-292, « as morals grew worse, language grows more refined » cf. also Thackeray's Preface to the *Virginians* and Clark Russell's *Collections and Recollections*. Yet it is plain (from the above mentioned letter to Montagu (*Lett.*, VII, p. 180), where we are told of an audience which includes at least three ladies before whom the tragedy is going to be read) that some kind of compromise could, no doubt, be effected. Among the blue-stockings, in the circle of Hannah More and Fanny Burney, the play was thoroughly banned of course and no one would hear of it. — 4. *Diary and Letters of Mrs D'Arblay*. Comp. also Fielding's and Smollett's novels. — 5. Walpole was of course well acquainted with the play c. f. sup. — 6. *Phedre.* Scenes II

Hippolytus has no bond of consanguinity with her. But both women are victims of an ardent and passionate desire to which they unwillingly give themselves up; and (1) both are to be pitied rather than anathematized. Along with Racine's *Phèdre* and Smith's *Phœdra and Hippolytus*, it is possible that Ambrose Philip's *Distressed Mother* may have provided Walpole with hints and suggestions. But it is not a mere hypothesis to state that among Rowe's plays, which he admired so much, *the Fair Penitent* made a strong and serviceable impression on him. In the hands of such actresses as Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Oldfield (2) a personage like the sentimentalised Calista, Rowe's « Fair Penitent, » might prove very effective.

Such lines as the following might have deeply struck Walpole who could not but remember them when he made his heroine speak.

Tis well ! These solemn sounds, this pomp of horror
Are fit to feed the frenzy of my soul.
Here is room for meditation ev'n to madness
Till the mind is bursting.

Likewise two tendencies much prevailing in Rowe's poetical drama could not escape Walpole. The first was the throwing of the interest on the female characters, a device which no doubt proved very attractive to the large body of women who now attended the theatre ; the second was the desire of working up the picturesque element by the use of adequate stage scenery. The « room hung with black : on one side Lotharo's body on a bier » « the skull and other bones (3) » which were among the stage properties of *The Fair Penitent* (4-5), plainly pointed out

and III act. I. — 1. *Ibid.* Scene III, etc. — 2. Racine's own Préface to *Phèdre*. — 3. Cf. Courthope, *op. cit.* vol. V, p. 438. — 4. Cp. Also in Dekker's *Honest Whore*. — 5. Act. V, scene V, p. 88.

to Walpole the way in which he might walk, should he want to make an impression on his audience.

The account of the story may in some manner, show how Walpole has worked out the subject, in order to make it stage worthy, dramatic, interesting. It was, in fact, the only time he tried his hand at the drama, and it should be borne in mind that the playwright who built up the plot of *The Mysterious Mother* was one and the same with the author who imagined the fantasies of *The Castle of Otranto*. Though the two prefaces to the *Castle* may not be looked upon as very serious and earnest productions, it should be noticed that several things which Walpole seems particularly to have taken to heart, are contained in them: firstly that terror and pity are the two principal instruments an author may resort to with advantage; secondly that it was a desirable thing that, « when everything is tending directly to the catastrophe, never is the reader's attention relaxed » (1). Moreover, the character of the domestics should be particularly noticed (2), then, Walpole's rule being « nature » (3), he pointed out that the sensations of the servants made a marked constrast with those of princes and heroes (4). He had copied Shakespeare in this. Again, that idea « that the sins of the fathers are visited on their children » (5) the notions of retribution, distributive justice, remorse seem to have been present to his mind. Closely connected with this, is the idea of Fate. The notion of an artful priest (6) was no doubt,

1. Preface to first edition, *Castle of Otranto*. Chiswick, edition 1823, London, p. 3. — 2. Preface first edition, *ibid.*, p. 3 Subalterns bring to light by their naiveté and simplicity, many passages essential to the story. — 3. Pref. to second edition *ibid.*, p. 9. — 4. Pref. to second edition, p. 10. — 5. *C. of. O.* Preface to the first edition *ibid.*, p. 4. — 6. *C. of O.* Preface to the first edition, p. 2 and 4.

also uppermost in his fancy. The relation between a priest or a monk and a Lord had been sketched out by him ; and he had also depicted a haughty lord and gentle maidens.

In *The Mysterious Mother* he was to portray an equally haughty lady and equally gentle maidens. Last of all in the *Castle*, there were superstitions attached to different things, for instance to the monument of Alphonso. Likewise we have in *The Mysterious Mother* (1) a goodly cross which was erected to the memory of the Count and there is a superstition extant that he sits with « clotted locks by the church door ». This, naturally with « our bard, whose head is fill'd with Gothic fancies, and teems with ghosts, and giants and romances, (2) » led to an adoption of a Gothic atmosphere in the tragedy, though the action is supposed to have taken place at an epoch much later than Gothic times. This however was no drawback ; the period could be (3) indefinitely extended and Walpole had had, in that special walk of the Gothic, many notable predecessors (4). It does not seem however, that, with the exception of the constant revival of Shakespeare's plays and occasional performances of Congreve's *Mourning Bride* there were any special attempts to excite Gothic fancy on the stage in Walpole's time (5).

1. Act. II, sc. II, p. 32. — 2. Epilogue to the *M.M.* to be spoken by Mrs Clive. — 3. Cf. Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*. — 4. Marlow's *Faustus*. Green *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* ; Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (the friar, the apothecary, etc.), *Hamlet* and, for stage scenery : Friar Laurence's cell, the apothecary's shop, Elsinor Castle, the churchyards both in *Romeo* and in *Hamlet*, many allusions to battlements, towers, etc. Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (scenery), Dekker (Cf. W. J. Courthope : « History of English Poetry », IV, 225-252) with his *Honest Whore*, and more recently, Congreve with his *Mourning Bride*. Act II, sc. I with the passage admired by Johnson. *Lives of the Poets* and act II, scene II. — 5. It should be noted however that

From the very beginning of the play, the Gothic atmosphere is forcibly and succcessfully created :

What awful silence ! how these antique towers
And vacant courts dull the suspended soul
Till expectation wears the cast of fear ;
And fear half-ready to become devotion,
Mumbles a kind of mental orison,
It knows not wherefore : —
What a kind of being is circumstance !
I am a soldier, and were yonder battlements,
Garnish'd with combatants, and cannon-mounted,
My daring breast would bound with exultation,
And glorious hopes enliven this drear scene.
Now dare not I scarce tread to my own hearing,
Lest echo borrow superstition's tongue,
And seem to answer me, like one departed.
I met a peasant, and inquired my way :
The carle, not rude of speech, but like the tenant
Of some night-haunted ruin, bore an aspect
Of horror, worn to habitude. He bade
God bless me ; and pass'd on. I urg'd him farther :
Good master, cried he, go not to the castle ;
There sorrow ever dwells, and moping misery.
I press'd him yet. None there, said he, are welcome,
But now and then a mass-priest, and the poor :
To whom the pious Countess deals her alms,
On covenant, that each revolving night
They beg of Heav'n the health of her son's soul
And of her own : But often as returns
The twentieth of September, they are bound
Fast from the midnight watch to pray till morn.
More would he not disclose, or knew not more. —

though the costume was far from being adequate, the scenery showed (Mrs Clement Parsons : *Garrick and his circle*, picture p. 74, London N. D.) some attempts towards Gothic.

— What precious mummery ! Her son in exile,
She wastes on monks and beggars his inheritance,
For his soul's health ! I never knew a woman
But loved our bodies or our souls too well.
Each master-whim maintains its hour of empire,
And obstinately faithful to its dictates,
With equal ardor, equal importunity,
They teaze us to be damned, or to be sav'd.
I hate to love or pray too long.

SCÈNE II

Enter Peter, the Porter of the Castle, and Florian.

Por. — Methought.
I heard a stranger's voice. What lack you, sir ?
Flor. — Good fellow, who inhabits here ?
Por. — I do.
Flor. — Belike this castle is not thine :
Por. — Belike so :
But be it whose it may, this is no haunt
For revellers and gallants — pass your way.
Flor. — Thou churl ! Is this your Gallic hospitality ?
Thy lady, on my life, would not thus rudely
Chide from her presence a bewilder'd knight.
Por. — Thou know'st my lady then ! — Thou know'st her not.
Canst thou in hair-cloths vex those dainty limbs ?
Canst thou on reeking pavements and cold marble,
In meditation pass the live-long night ?
Canst mortify that flesh, my rosy minion,
And bid thy rebel appetite refrain
From goblets foaming wine, and costly viands ?
These are the deeds, my youngster, must draw down
Mylady's ever heav'n-directed eye.
Flor. — In sooth, good friend, my knighthood is not school'd.
In voluntary rigours. I can fast,

*

March supperless, and make cold earth my pillow,
When my companions know no choicer fare.
But seldom roost in churches, or reject
The ready banquet or a willing fair one.

Por. — Angels defend us ! What a reprobate !
Yon mould'ring porch, for sixteen years and more
Has not been struck with such unhallow'd sounds.
Hence to thy lewd companions !

Flor. — Father greybeard,
I cry you mercy ; — nor was it my intention
To wound your reverence's faint-like organs.
But come, thou hast known other days — canst tell
Of banquettings and dancings —' twas not always thus.

Por. — No, no — time was — my lord, the Count of Narbonne,
A prosperous gentleman : were he alive,
We should not know these moping melancholies.
Heaven rest his soul ! I marvel not my lady
Cherishes his resemblance, for he was
Comely to fight, and wond'rous goodly built.
They say his son Count Edmund's mainly like him.
Would these old arms, that serv'd his grand-father,
Could once enfold him ! I should part in peace.

Flor. — What, if I bring thee a tidings of Count Edmund !

Por. — Mercy befall me ! — Now my dream is out,
Last night the raven croaked, and from the bars
Of our lodge-fire flitted a messenger —
I knew no good would follow — Bring you ill tidings,
Sir, gentleman ?

Flor. — (This is a solemn fool,
Or solemn knave) (*aside*). Shouldst thou indeed rejoice
To see Count Edmund ? Would thy noble mistress
Spring with a mother's joy to clasp her son ?

Por. — Oh ! no, no, no. — He must not here
Alas !
He must not here set foot.

The Gothic atmosphere is equally well brought out in the description which Walpole makes of the widow in weeds.

[The Countess in weeds, with a crucifix in her hand issues from the castle, accompanied by two maidens, and passes over the stage. When she is gone, Florian returns.]

Por. — (Continues). 'Tis 'Tis ever thus.
At break of morn, she hies to yonder abbey,
And prostrate o'er some monumental stone,
Seems more to wait her doom, than ask to shun it.
The day is pass'd in minist'ring to wants
Of health or means ; the closing eve beholds
New tears, new pray'rs, or haggard meditation.
But if cold moonshine, deep'ning ev'ry frown
Of these impending towers, invite her steps,
She issues forth. — Beshrew me, but I tremble,
When my own keys discharge the drawbridge chains,
And rattle thro' the castle's farmost vaults.
Then have I seen this sad, this sober mourner,
With frantic gesture and disorder'd step —
But hush — who moves up yonder avenue ?
It is — no, stay — i'faith ! But it is he,
My lady's Confessor, with Friar Martin.
Quick hie thee hence — should that same meddling monk
Observe our conf'rence, there were fine work toward.

Flor. — You will not leave your tale unfinish'd ?

Por. — Mass ! but I will ; a tale will pay no stipend.
These fifty winters have I borne my staff,
And will not lose my porridge for my prating.

Flor. — Well ! but Count Edmund — Wo't not hear of him ?

Por. — Aye, bless his name ! at any leisure hour.
This evening, ere the shutting of the gates,
Loiter about yon grange ; Ill come to there.
So now, be gone — Away !

[*Exeunt severally.*]

In spite of the story's being « disgusting, revolting » (1) Walpole, who knew that, however incredible it seemed, it was founded on an event in real life and also, that « our delicacy is more apt to be shocked than our good nature », did not refrain from treating the subject. Delicacy he considered « sometimes might be shocked, when the moral (2) resulting from the calamities attendant on unbounded passion was obviously suited to the purpose and object of tragedy ». Analysis of character and study of remorse then (3) played a very important part in Walpole's scheme. He probably had (4) the subject of OEdipus in his mind and thought not only to palliate the crime, (5) but also to raise the character of the criminal. So, not for the mere and facile pleasure of keeping (6) the audience in suspense, but also in order to make a truly dramatic study of remorse and repentance, Walpole rightly reserved the explanatory story for the very end of the play. Having arrayed his Countess in every ornament of sense, unbigoted piety, and interesting contrition or compunction, Walpole hoped to have made her an object of pity.

Countess (Speaking to Father Benedict)

— Consult a holy man ! Inquire of him !
— Good father, wherefore ? What should I inquire ?
Must I be taught of him, that guilt is woe ?
That innocence alone is happiness ?
That martyrdom itself shall leave the villain
The villain that it found him ! Must I learn
That minutes stamp'd with crimes are past recall ?
That joys are momentary ; and remorse
Eternal ? Shall he teach me charms and spells,
To make my sense believe against my sense ?

1. P. 94. *Postscript.*, and *letter* to Montagu.— 2. *Postscript.*, p. 94. — 3. Cf. *Prologue to M. M.* — 4. *Poscript.*, p. 94. — 5. *Idem.*, p. 96. — 6. Cf. *Prologue to M. M.*

Shall I think practices and penances
Will, if he say so, give the health of virtue
To gnawing self-reproach ? — I know they cannot.
Nor could one risen from the dead proclaim
This truth in deeper sounds to my conviction.
We want no preacher to distinguish vice
From virtue. At our birth the God reveal'd
All conscience needs to know. No codicil
To duty's rubric here and there was plac'd
In some saint's casual custody. Weak minds
Want their soul's fortune told by oracles
And holy jugglers. Me, nor oracles,
Nor prophets, death alone can certify,
Whether, when justice's full dues exacted,
Mercy shall grant one drop to slake my torment.
— Here, father, break we off ; you to your calling ;
I, to my tears and mournful occupation.

However, lest (1) the audience might still be indignant (2), against the Countess, he painted the villainous character of Benedict in the darkest colours. Not so very black contends Walpole (3) who wanted him to inspire not only disgust, « but also terror ». This was, with pity, the second essential spring which is truly tragic, as the arch-villain Benedict, the enemy against whom the Countess has to contend, is the instrument which brings about the catastrophe.

The situation has come to a crisis for several reasons, and the « mother » can no longer indeed remain myste-

1. *Prologue to M.M.* — 2. He fully realized how delicate the situation was. Cf. *Postscript* p. 99 : « May a *true heroine* venture on the stage to enter, in this age severe and in these censorious days? » he asked both ironically and doubtfully seven years later : *Epilogue to Braganza* 1775. — 3. *Postscript*, p. 99 « if we call to mind the crimes committed by Catholic Churchmen, when the Reformation not only provoked their

rious. Edmund's unexpected return which bids fair to break the hopes of « the Church », and his decision to come at last, to an explanation with his mother, added to the Countess' own attitude all may cause the Churchmen to fear. Indeed she turns to Protestantism even to « Methodism ». The author's business was therefore to make the character of the Countess as interesting as it was prominent. She is represented as being, not only a woman of strong personality, but also, most tragically unhappy (1).

Labouring both under intense sorrow and unconcealed remorse, she begs, and at the same time refuses, all kinds of comfort.

Above all, that sense of awe which she is meant to inspire, is intentionally heightened by the fact that, as the name which she gives to the play sufficiently indicates, she is a « riddle » (2), a mystery. She is so in several ways. Being a Catholic she seeks pardon for her sins « on covenant that » « each revolving night », a « mass-priest » and « the poor to whom she deals her alms », must.

> Beg of Heav'n the health of her son's soul
> And of her own (I, 1).

Her « Heaven ever-directed eye » looks favourably only upon those who,

rage, but threatened them with total ruin. » — 1. [The Countess in weeds, with a crucifix in her hand, issues from the castle, accompanied by two maidens, and passes over the stage. When she is gone Florian returns.]

Por (*continues*). — 'Tis ever thus.

At break of morn, she hies to yonder abbey... etc., as above.

2. I must know this riddle.

I must, will comfort her, says her son.

On reeking pavements and cold marble
In meditation pass the livelong night
And mortify the flesh.

Yet she never opens her soul to her confessor (1),Father Benedict, and persistently (2) refuses absolution.

Martin. — What is this secret sin; this untold tale,
That art cannot extract nor penance cleanse?
Loss of a husband, sixteen years enjoyed,
And dead as many, could not stamp such sorrow.
Nor could she be his death's artificer,
And now affect to weep it — I have heard,
That chasing, as he homeward rode, a stag,
Chas'd by the hounds, with sudden onset slew
Th' adventurous Count.
Benedict. — 'Twas so; and yet, my brother.
My mind has more than once imputed blood
To this incessant mourner. Beatrice,
The damsel for whose sake holds in exile
Her only son, has never, since the night
Of his incontinence, been seen or heard of.
Martin. — 'Tis clear; 'tis clear; nor will her prudent tongue
Accuse its owner.
Benedict. — Judge not rashly, brother
I oft have shifted my discourse to murder :
She notes it not. Her muscles hold their place,
Not discompos'd, nor firm'd to steadiness.
No sudden flushing, and no fault'ring lip :
Nor, tho, she pities, lifts she to her eyes
Her handkerchief, to palliate her disorder.

1. I, scene II. — 2. I, scene III, p. 14. This is one of the many quasi impossibilities of the play: during the lapse of eighteen years she has not then probably partaken of holy communion and must in consequence appear a very strange and appalling sinner in the eyes of all who know

There the wounds rankles not. — I've fix'd on love,
The failure of the sex, and aptest cause
Of each attendant crime. —

MARTIN. — Aye, brother, there
We master all their craft. Touch but that string —

BENEDICT. — Well, brother, do you err. She own'd to me,
That, tho'of nature warm, the passion love
Did ne'er anticipate her choice. The Count,
Her husband, so ador'd and so lamented,
Won not her fancy, till the nuptial rites
Had with the sting of pleasure taught her passion.
This, with such modest truth, and that truth heighten'd
By conscious sense, that holds deceit a weakness,
She utter'd, I would pawn my order's credit
Of her veracity.

MARTIN. — Then whither turn
To worm her secret out?

BENEDICT. — I know not that.
She will be silent, but she scorns a falsehood.
And thus while frank on all things, but her secret
I know, I know it not.

So very austere is her mien that the priests say that this woman was not cast in human mould. « Ten such, says Benedict cynically (1), would (2) unbuild our Roman church... In her devotion's real »; almost a Protestant, she leans already towards « the singing saints of Savoy's neighbouring vale » (3). « Yours are Pagan virtues

her condition. — 1. Act I, scene III. «With her there is no dallying or tampering with guilt ». — 2. *Ibid.* — 3. Act IV, scene I, p. 59.

Must I be taught of him that guilt is woe?
That innocence alone is happiness? etc...
Shall I think practices and penances
Will, if he say so, give the health of virtue
To gnawing self-reproach? Know they cannot...

Benedict tells her (1); likewise she constantly urges her son (2) to emulate his forefathers' high deeds.

This strength of mind on the part of the Countess is partly real, because it rests on sincere feeling; otherwise it is but an outward show of strength : great sorrows have undermined the mental qualities and the physical constitution of the Countess. Pretend as she may, the « new horrors », « Gothic horrors », in which she is being constantly nursed by Benedict's craft have slowly, but surely helped to (3) unbalance her mind completely.

The comparisons she uses show that her thoughts are bent on death (4). Very early deprived of the husband on whom she doted, this woman who was sensual (5), if we may say so, cannot but feel both the pangs of her blasted love for her husband, and of her maternal love for her son, and perhaps, still burning with secret fires, she is tortured by the ever present memory of her crime.

No solace can she find for this. Putting no trust in the priests who surround her, knowing that, at times, under the influence of passionate and desperate remorse, she may let out her awful secret, and « suggest strange crimes to shuddering matrons (6) », she grows « artful (7) » in order to conceal her guilt. Her character then affords to the author an opportunity for a study of deep despair, and in the end, for the representation of passionate distraction. Her reason at last totally unhinged (8), by that which

1. Act. IV. scene I, p. 19. — 2. Id. p. 28. — 3. P. 50. a « soul unwound like mine ». — 4. For instance : *M.M.* act I, scene v, p. 19.

Pass a few years and I shall be a corse
Will flattery then, new cloath my skeleton
Fill out these hollow jaws

5. P. 24. Though H. W. pretends not to have known it at the time, the sensuality of the Contes de la Reine de Navarre, seems to pervade a few scenes. — 6. P. 83. — 7. P. 83, as Benedict says. — 8. P. 98.

is ever uppermost in her mind, she grows mad. And whilst under the horror of the final catastrophe, she commits suicide, having already virtually broken down. Crushed by the hand of fate is also her son Edmund.

Edmund's character, however is far from being delineated with the same firmness of outline as that of the Countess. Walpole had only to follow the bent of his own mind, to present her as a woman of high rank, aristocratic feelings, and supreme spirit. Edmund whose case much resembles that of OEdipus, and in some ways, but more remotely, that of Orestes, is represented as a brave soldier, but tired of his profession. He wants to come back to his castle, not only because he is weary, but also because, in spite of her harshness towards him, his mother has won his love by winning his respect (1), on account of the unstudied strains of virtuous eloquence, she puts in her letters. His speeches however, notwithstanding some pungent bitterness, and sombre railing, have a rather hollow and passionless strain; there is too much rhetoric in them.

Though it is the same with his friend Florian's tirades, Florian is less of a dummy, a « lay figure » than Edmund. He has a lashing sarcastic tongue, and he is a lively personage, with whom Benedict and Martin find it hard to deal. This young man (2), the Pylades of an unfortunate Orestes, this bosom friend of Edmund, is somewhat of a cynic and a braggart, who, in the absence of any purely or even remotely comic character in the play, is meant to relieve the spectator's mind with his apothegms on women, or his retorts to the old servant (3). He is not light-headed, but he does not like to occupy his mind too

1. P. 28.— 2. Thy years are green, p. 84.— 3. I never knew a woman but

long upon the same thing (I, scene 1) (1), to impose upon himself « voluntary rigours ». When necessary, he can fast and « make cold earth his pillow ». He is a more striking and better drawn soldier than Edmund. He is a gallant and noble soldier of the same type, but unlike Edmund, he has not yet grown weary and sick of camp life.

With his dainty limbs (2), his aspect is that of a « rosy minion » (3). But to call him as the priests do, « lewd » or « reprobate », is to thoroughly misrepresent him. It is true, he speaks ironically of the virtues of the Countess, he even laughs at Edmund's desires and hopes (4) for domestic bliss and is rude enough (5) when speaking of Adeliza. Being a man of hot temper and plain speech (6), his buoyant spirit, his optimistic outlook (7), though affected by the gloomy castle, make a strong contrast with the superstition-ridden old Peter, and the anxieties of that good but superannuated man. Florian wishes to cheer up lest

> This ague of contagious bigotry,

should « gain » on him. In the end, with great discretion and consideration, he does every thing in his power to comfort both the Countess or his friend Edmund. His better nature continually peeps out, notwithstanding the

lov'd our bodies or our soul too well. — 1. I hate to love or pray too long (Act I. scene II.) — 2. *Ibid.* — 3. P. 30. — 4. She must be fruitful. — 5. There is no doubt, however, that here, as in the delineation of Edmund's character, Walpole is not absolutely at his ease when describing a turbulent soldier. Since he did not want for his Edmund such a companion as Hamlet had, in Horatio, Tybalt or even Hotspur might have afforded him models. But Florian is far more philosophically minded than any of them. — 6. P. 77. — 7. Cf. p. 28 « True my Lord, etc...

stinging words he sometimes flings against the two priests.

Laying cynicism aside, he speaks boldly, and openly expresses the views of a humanitarian (1) and a candid free-thinker.

The last two sympathetic characters need not much particular study. Adeliza the young and unfortunate daughter, sister and bride of Edmund may be intended for an exquisite and lovable personage, but Walpole himself admits that « the tender is not easy », and, that of all his characters, that of Adeliza contented him the least (2). She is indeed too faint a picture, too sweet, too gentle ; she has complete resignation to the will of everybody. She was, it is true, a character most difficult to draw. Old Peter the porter shows the scrupulous care with which Walpole wanted to work up his minor personæ. This doting « father grey beard » is a man of some dignity (3) and very proud of his office. He is deeply devoted to the Countess, and feeble-minded though he be, he suspects many of the dark ways of « the meddling monks » (4), of those « that are paid for being saints ».

Of these two arch-villains, Martin (5) is but the confident of Benedict, and helps him to expound to the spectator his dark and terrible schemes : Benedict is, after the Countess, the principal character in the play. My Lady's Confessor is a shrewd painstaking man who, out of am-

1. Cf. p. 28. — 2. Cf. *Let.*, *Toyn. Sup.*, I, 256. — 3. P. 75-76. In opposition to what he did in the *Castle*, Walpole has introduced here, no really low characters such as domestics, etc. in their their proper garb. Old Peter represents the impression made by the Countess on ordinary eyes, and shows how austere, formidable and imposing she is. — 4. Act I, scene III ; act V, scene II. — 5. Though in one instance, he shows himself still more cynical than Benedict (p. 59), he is at the same time a flatterer of Benedict who shrewdly tells him (p. 58) that he is quite aware of it.

bition for a « crimson bonnet » (1), has banished every virtue « from his breast ». He is (2) a spiteful « barefooted monk » who cannot even bear the « lilied monarchs of his realm » and for whom even murder would have charms, if it were necessary to establish the power of the Church, which he wants every one to acknowledge. No really genuine and Christian faith does this terrible priest seem to have. He is not even like Martin a narrow-minded bigot ; on the contrary he seems to be a most fierce and cynical unbeliever.

Our beads, our hymns, our saints amuse her not,

he says contemptuously and cynically when speaking of the effect produced on the Countess by his own religion. Poor mastery is mine, says he to Martin ;

Bened. — Poor mastery ! when I am more in awe
Of my own penitent ! than she of me.
My genius is command, art, but a tool
My groveling fortune forces me to use,
Oh ! were I seated high as my ambition,
I'd place this naked foot on necks of monarchs
And make them bow to creeds myself would
Laugh at. (alluding to Sixtus Quintus).

Act. I, Sc. III, p. 16.

This man who has no faith left in him (3), (and this is

1. P. 16. Gain to the Holy See this fair domain;
A crimson bonnet may reward your toils,
And the rich harvest prove at last your own.
Act. I, scene III, p. 16.

2. Act. V, scene I. — 3. Act. V, scenes I and II. For him, a priest initiated,
In each fond mummery that subdues the vulgar
Should not stand appall'd at his own thunders.

Walpole's excuse for having depicted a priest as being such a thorough rascal) is nearly as strong minded as the Countess (1). Ambition and the acquisition of « Fair Narbonne's domain », for the Church, are not the only motive powers that actuate him. In this monk, who is a man of action not easily daunted, breathes the spirit of revenge, and therefore the author has made him the prime mover of the catastrophe. Since both Edmund and the Countess (2) are « thinking heretics » and « must reason », they must not be spared. Since the Countess (3) « is already lost or never was our own », « I cannot dupe, and therefore must destroy her ».

Being also a crafty man, Benedict, at the moment the tragedy begins, still refrains from showing his dominant spirit openly. At times, he humbles himself before the Countess, lest (4) he should seem « a craving and immodest almoner ». So at last, he worms himself into the secret of the Countess : he feels that he is guessing right, having for some time conjectured what her secret may be. Finding that with Edmund's return all his hopes of domination have irretrievably come to an end, he immediately resolves upon the best, quickest, and most cruel means of undoing both the Countess and her son. Cruelty in this smooth spoken rascal is one characteristic which, with some display of art, is slowly borne in upon the reader. This unctuous and hypocritical personage who addresses the fair saint Adeliza thus : « Why sighs that gentle bosom ? » speaks of her as « a lamb », an easy prey for « eagles » (5), that is for himself and Martin. Being a good psychologist, he, not only takes advantage of his power-

1. He would (and this is a reminiscence from Lady Macbeth) « tremble only if he failed ». — 2. P. 58. — 3. P. 59. — 4. — He says it himself : he is not an honest bigot (p. 15). — 5. P. 19.

ful mind to probe the Countess anxieties and desperate flutterings, but also to manœuvre against her.

— « What joys have I? was she saying to him.

What pleasure softens, or what friendship soothes
My aching bosom? — I have lost my husband :
My own decree has banish'd my own son.

BENED. — Last night I dreamt your son was with the blessed.

COUNT. — Would heav'n he were !

BENED. — Do you then wish his death?

COUN. — Should I not wish him blest !

BENED. — Belike he is :
I never knew my Friday's dreams erroneous.

COUN. — Nor I knew superstition in the right.

BENED. — Madam, I must no longer hear this language.
You do abuse my patience. I have borne,
For your soul's health, and hoping your conversion,
Opinions most deprav'd. It ill beseems
My holy function to give countenance,
By lending ear, to such pernicious tenets.
The judgments hanging o'er your destin'd head
May reach ev'n me — I see it ! I am wrapt
Beyond my bearing ! My prophetic soul
Views the red falchion of eternal justice
Cut off your sentenc'd race — your son is dead !

COUN. — Father, we no prophetic dæmon bear
Within our breast, but conscience. That has spoken
Words more tremendous than this acted zeal,
This poetry of fond enthusiasm
Can conjure up. It is the still small voice
That breathes conviction. 'Tis that voice has told me,
'Twas my son's birth, not his mortality,
Must drown my soul in woe — Those tears are shed.

BENED. — Unjust, uncharitable as your words,
I pardon them. Illy of me you deem ;
I know it, lady. 'Tis humiliation :

As such I bow to it — Yet dear I tender
Your peace of mind. Dismiss your worthless servant :
His pray'rs shall still be yours.
COUN. — Forgive me, father :
Discretion does not guide my words. I meant
No insult on your holy character.

Benedict knows that « ebon night is no logician » and that her mind being impressed by the dreadful (1) stories he relates, she sometimes calls for lights at night. So Benedict prides himself on the power he has of imposing upon people, and domineering over them with the notion that he enjoys some supernatural power. This terrible personage who possesses none of the redeeming points of « the Father Jerome » of the *Castle*, helps to complete the Gothic impression of a play in which unsolved mysteries, hints of foul murder (2), superstitions of all kinds, signs and prophecies (3), harrow the minds of credulous people.

To judge the play fairly, one should lay aside the fact that the subject is « disgusting », and moreover that it is treated in many speeches after Voltaire's way, in an anti-papist manner. If, however, we except some tirades which may easily be suppressed (4), the play is interesting.

Whatever Walpole may afterwards have said about it, with his characteristic « mauvaise honte », the play was not designed in any special manner for the exclusive use of the closet, but is meant for the true home of the drama, the stage. The theatrical aim, the mechanical parts (5), necessary to keep the reader in suspense, are preserved

1. P. 15. I have known her call for lights. — 2. That of the girl Beatrice. Phèdre exculpates herself to Œnone (act. I, sc. v) of such dark crimes. — 3. H. W. Preface to first Edition of the *Castle*. — 4. From Florian's especially. This, of course, looking at them from a purely theatrical stand point. — 5. *Toynb. Sup*, I, p. 255.

with some degree of success ; but now and then, some rather crude or even childish stage effect (1) may impress the reader unfavourably. Last of all, it may be asked, whether the revenge of a private disappointment, such as that of Benedict, may not be looked upon as scarcely sane enough for bringing about, with sufficient dignity, the catastrophe of a tragedy. The interest does not flag much anywhere, yet the development of the plot is a little vacillating in places. Intensity of passion also, is not shown in such a remarkable manner as to induce much interest on this ground. The « riddle » of *The Mysterious Mother* may be deep and fascinating, but the soundings of her dark and subtle secrecies are not very striking. The natural pathos (2), which should arise spontaneously from genuine sorrow, is awkwardly expressed. Fancy and ingenuity are better displayed in the management of terror than in the stage presentation of pity. It is, however, difficult to realize what impression an actual performance of the play would make upon an intelligent spectator. The question is indeed how would Walpole's style in this tragedy pass, as the French say, « beyond the footlights ».

There is no doubt that Walpole bestowed much care on style and form in his work. The attention he paid later on (3) to the subject shows the importance he attached to it. The « invention of a very new and peculiar style » for tragedy even seemed to him (4) most desirable. Milton and Shakespeare had tried it and succeeded ; Dryden had attempted it with a poor result ; Walpole did not venture so far as that in his practice, but his style

1. Forbear, etc., beginning of the etc. *The Anthem*, act IV, scene II. — 2. Or as Disraeli has it ; The Natural pathetic. *Miscellanies of Literature*, vol. I, p. 38-40. — 3. Cf. *ib.*, 24, 1775. *Lett. Toyn. Sup.*, I, p. 245 and, *ibid.* 251. — 4. *Ibid.*, 250.

shows so much painstaking and impressive force that, bent on the perfection of his work, it is evident he tried to make his form, and especially his language, a fit vehicle of the thoughts, emotions and even sensations, he wanted to convey into the mind of his reader or of his audience.

Just as poetic diction in poetry generally, a special kind of phraseology which closely resembled it, prevailed on the stage at the time when *The Mysterious Mother* was written. Lee had greatly exaggerated the examples set forth by Dryden and Otway ; with brilliant features of style, such as antithesis and contrast, high-sounding words, rant and bombast ; personages of all kinds talked at the top of their voices, on all occasions. The play was still indeed of the « heroic » kind ; it was thought the more « heroic » in proportion as its style was stilted and hysterical. But though Walpole was not insensible to the tragic powers of Dryden and even of Lee (1), he did not want to be sublime (2) in that way (3); but strength, impressiveness and dignity, together with originality of expression, were qualities which he most assiduously cultivated.

The stiff and hard characteristics of his vocabulary in the heroic couplet are reproduced in his dramatic language. His tendency to use strong words (4) or energetic

1. *Lett. Toyn. Sup.*, I, p. 251.— 2. Exclamations and vocative phrases were among some of the common practices of tragic poetry, sometimes they helped to fill a gap in the line and are much used by Walpole. What awful silence ! what kind of being is circumstance ! What precious mummery ! (lines 1 to 29 I. I.) In sooth ! I cry you mercy ! mercy befall me ! If thou beliest not ! Mass ! Well ! wot not hear of him... aye bless his name ! act I, sc. II, etc., are also frequent stock phrases. — 3. Such rant as : to whirl the orbs and launch the comet, is fortunately seldom met with (p. 83, I, II). — 4. A prayer is « mumbled » (I, I). The expression is taken from the *Epistle from Florence :* mumbling something

combinations (1) is obvious. Dignity is present everywhere.

The practice of the intermixture of comic with tragic elements which Walpole had so much commended in Shakespeare was carefully avoided in *The Mysterious Mother*. Neither Florian, nor old Peter with his silver garnished staff, are comic characters in the least. The very large quantity of learned words of French or Latin origin which are scattered throughout the dialogue, helps to give it a tragic dignity much sought after, no doubt, by the dramatist (2). But the originality of the words (3), and of the expressions, some of which are thoroughly idiomatic, but *obsolete* or rather archaic (4), is not the greatest characteristic of the style. Contrast, opposition, and epigrammatic turns of sentences, are the intimate texture

between a charm and a prayer ; a peasant is a carle, a churl (I, I), a priest is a mass-priest (I, I), devotion is mummery (I, I), a young officer = a minion (I, II) ; a glass = a goblet (I, II) ; and such expressions as urchin : boy (I, IV) ; beadsman (I, V) ; tenet (II, I) ; to deem = to think (II, I) ; to thrid your gates = to pass your gates (II, I) ; a portal has jaws. (II, I) ; a passionate woman = a Magdalene (II, I), and so everywhere ; to gag your lips (V, II) ; raiment = clothing. *ibid* such verbs as : to asperse, to behove, *ibid.*, etc. — 1. On covenant that (I, I), to tread to my own hearing (I, I) ; to wear the cast of fear (I, I) ; goblets foaming wine (I, II) ; costly viand, the ready banquet, the willing fair one (I, II), good man exorcist (V, II) ; naughty beverage (*ibid.*, V, III), foul fogs, lazy clouds, moping air, the most frequent practice is either the addition of some epithet which reinforces the meaning (ebon night), or forms some startling combination honest bigot ; night-haunted-ruin, holy-juggler ; heaven-invoking, soul-dissolving dirge.

1. Some epithets especially : vacant court (I, I), vagrant life (II, I), suspended soul (I, I), my casual arm (II, I), approved valour (II, I), farmost vaults (I, I) ; or some words particularly grand or refined : gallant (I, II) ; reprobate (I, II) ; to garnish with combatants (I, I) ; orison, visage (I, IV), duty's rubric (I, IV), sycophant, canonized, jollity, to chaunt (II, II), aspin (p. 61). — 2. Trammels, encomium, poignant puling moppet, sleeveless, pilgrimage (p. 55), dæmon (much used with this spelling), fury, grange and adamount (spelling). — 3 and 4. Belike, beshrew, befits it me. Pass me this levity, yonder, morn, caitiff (p. 80). Thy caitiff life, Got wot, and

of it (1). The numerous elisions (all indicated by apostrophes), the use of the Saxon genitive (2), all these contribute to give to the style, or rather to the printed letter bristling with apostrophes, an outward aspect which reminds one of texts belonging to the XVIII^th century ; otherwise the style is undoubtedly strong and rather Elizabethan.

Walpole's blank verse is remarkable for its regular cast of rhythm, in a general manner. Trochees or spondees of course occur at the beginning of a line (3) ; but not very frequently ; feminine endings are to be met with (4), but they are not a very common practice ; as to weak endings, they are rare, and do not agree with Walpole's treatment of the verse (5). For good rhythm and well preserved iambic movement, are necessary in lines which are first,

the constant omission of do in negative interrogative * or subjunctive sentences **. — 1. Holiness begins where Nature ends (II, I). Pleasure has charms, but so has virtue too (II, II). I cannot dupe and therefore must destroy her (IV, II). A soldier causes woe but seldom jeers it (p. 78). There is contrast also in the mixture of such archaic expressions as those above mentioned and many learned words of Latin origin — apprized, estranged. — 2. Superstition's tongue, soul's health, your morning's gracious pleasure, suggestion's whisper (p. 80), murder's foul suspicion (p. 39). Lusty life's full vantage (p. 32), presumption's tongue (p. 33). — 3. The proportion of trochees or spondees at the beginning of a line is for instance : 13 out of a hundred (I, 1) ; first hundred lines ; 14 out of a hundred (act V, scene 4) ; the first a soliloquy, the second a dialogue. — 4. The proportion is 17 feminine endings out of a hundred lines (I, 1), and also 18 out of a hundred in V., scene 4. — 5. Such lines as : « Beyond the compass of things possible », are fortunately rare.

*Cf. Also : pronounces *it* for thee or me. — ** Form belonging to stilted language like : Lest echo borrow superstition's tongue (subjunctive without should), or the inversion of the adjective : a lady most disconsolate (p. 32). While the favourite trick of poetic diction, personification and use of the possessive case is so noticeable, the imitation of Shakespearian language is no less remarkable : Sift her (Cf. Hamlet) my ghostly friend (Romeo) wait me, fail us, at our own dexterity (p. 58) ; that fears the limbs, (for frightens the limbs) ; it rest obedience (p. 50) ; I bow me (p. 51.)

constantly broken with pauses (and this not particularly in conversation but in all sorts of cases) (1), and secondly, which belong to the overflow, or « run-on » kind. In fact, if end stopt lines do exist, they are not perhaps so numerous as run-on lines (2). These, with the frequent use of alliteration (3) show an undeniable mastery over blank verse. Pause, or more especially break in the verse at the end of one

1. Soliloquies have as many pauses as dialogues, not unfrequently an extra syllable at the pause :

I cry you mer [cy], nor was it my intention I. 1.

2. They are of all kinds , with an infinitive :

I came with charitable friendly purpose
To soothe (III, 3) ; after a verb :
He bade God bless me (I, 1) ;
And snatched from the readiest fury there
A blazing torch V, 4) ;
Between subject and verb : gownmen
Wear it for show (V, 4) ;
I announced thy Edmund
Was numbered with (III, 3),
Auxiliary and verb :
Were yonder battlements
Garnished (I, 1)
After was and a weak ending
... for he was
Comely to sight.

8 run on lines out of a hundred I(, 1). 16 out of a hundred (V. 4).

3. Alliteration is not very frequent, but where it does occur it is nearly always in a forcible and conspicuous manner cf. *W.* and *s.*

Wist not *what woman was. I warrant* him (I, 1, p. 10).
Then I have *seen* this *sad*, this *sober* mourner (*Ibid.*, p. 11).

The author does not seem to have dashed off his alliterations at random, or by mere chance, but to be always striving after some special effect. It may certainly sometimes have been so, as in : thy wit and *mine* are *more* upon a level p. 78 or ; A soldier causes woe, but seldom jeers it ; but in such lines as the following, alliterative *s, l* and *r* are used for their own sake. For exemple :

To her nymph
Like spotless swans in solemn majesty
Breasts the *full* surge and *leaves long light* behind.
And I *suggest strange crimes* to shuddering matrons.

line being uttered by one personage who answers his interlocutor whose sentence came to a stop before the line was finished (1). This practice, Walpole probably looked upon as imparting to his lines a particularly dramatic quality. Indeed, the comparative ease which run-on verse and frequent breaks in the dialogue afford to his lines, greatly relieves the stiff density of his language (2) and versification. In his treatment of form, in this dramatic blank verse, as in many other points of this poetical work, Walpole has shown qualities of no common order, and one may regret he should not have, here as elsewhere, attempted to turn them to better account. The Form, in this tragedy, is a fit vehicle for the Thought. With its strong iambic rhythm and its well adapted variations, its good old English blank verse (3) is often vigorous and expressive of the force of character of the Countess and of Edmund, relentlessly led with dark prophetic warnings (4) to the

1. Cf. It knows not wherefore (I, 1).

I hate to love or pray to long.

Methought (I, 1) etc.

2. This density is remarkable : the constant use of the negative but. But now and I met Edmund (p. 77) cf. I never knew a woman.

But lov'd our bodies or our souls too well, — which spares the use of relatives.

The total avoidance of do in negative sentences.

Priest mock me not — amuse her not. (I, III, p. 12) Though I accuse not (III, IV, p. 55). The use of the briefest imperative form : Pass we this levity. Retire we, and observe (p. 39).

An unquestionable fondness for monosyllabic expressions : some lines being entirely made up of them.

Pass a few years, and I shall be a corse ;

The suppression of the relative that : I lend a clue may vibrate to my heart ; all these contribute to the density of the style.

3. Cf. *Quarterly Review*, vol. XIX, 1818, p. 122. — 4. To this should be added Walpole's painstaking attempt towards the creation of a suitable atmosphere, the antique towers and vacant courts, where the echo seems to answer like « one departed », the reeking pavement and cold marble of

brink of a doom, which, notwithstanding their cries of despair and dreadful agonies of mind will overcome them.

That the author was quite capable of an original, strong and striking expression of Gothic feeling is sufficiently evinced by many of the passages we have quoted (1).

the churches, the peasant with his « aspect of horror worn to habitude ». — 1. Among them, the passage beginning : But if cold moonshine : down to... vaults (*M. M.* p. 10.)

CONCLUSION

As a whole, Walpole's poetry, within its small compass, could not be expected to express his individuality so strongly as his prose writings. All the same his light verse exhibits a great deal of ingenious fancy, and an agreeable and sometimes sensuous play of the imagination (1). Gallantry, reverence, or at least compliments paid to female excellence, were no doubt congenial to a rather dandified temper, which cultivated delicacy and grace. It is strange enough then, that in certain places some egregious errors of taste (2) have been detected. It is also to be regretted that obscurity should be the common defect of some of his poems which being trifles, or pretending to be so, demanded high finish and clearness. More than an ordinary degree of knowledge was required from his readers if they wanted to enjoy his poetry, at least his serious poetry. Insipid and tame as it is, in places, revealing some of the disqualifications and shortcomings of the author, it, however, embodies to

1. *The Beauties, To the Vernons, Lines on Grignan.* — 2. See in the *Epistle* several instances of brutality of speech (cf. also, above we noticed, *Granville's Portrait, M^me^ du Deffand's Portrait, Eckhardt's Beauties*) and in *The Mysterious Mother*, Florian's allusion to Adeliza. « She must be fruitful ». Benedict's allusion to indigestion, etc.

great advantage his ideas on worldly virtue, good manners and the « beauties of propriety ». Some parts of the *Epistle from Florence*, or of the *Portrait of M^me^ du Deffand* and one passage of the *Elegy on Lady Hervey* which is quite striking on this account, exhibit this love of polite learning or refined philosophy.

The satirical powers of his mind, and his gift for comic or burlesque writing, are well exemplified in the verses of *The Funeral of the Lioness.*

> The widow'd monarch much was grieved,
> Yet compliments in form received ; etc.

His poetry also exhibits his Whig temper, and his Whig principles, in the most unquestionable manner. We find them both again in his tragedy and as they are some of the most important features of the man, it is just as well that his poetry should have helped to bring them into strong relief.

In this serious poetry, the autobiographical, philosophical, and even literary interest may be regarded as insufficient to compensate thoughts, not always particularly striking or original, or numbers which might be more musical.

But though his serious poetry has some interesting and redeeming characteristics, such as strength, passion, idiomatic force of expression, though his light poetry is adorned with such pretty pieces as *Countess Temple, appointed poet laureate*, or *What a rout do you make for a poor single kiss*, it is not there that Walpole as a poet is seen at his best. His light compositions are pretty, but too trifling : little XVIII^th^ century pearls set in gilt trinkets tarnished by time, rather faded jewelry

they seem, though their workmanship may have required much pains (1).

His poetry half serious, half ludicrous (2) though it may not be quite so graceful as some of his delicate poetical wantonings, has much more thought, and something idiomatic, and in the conversational key, with a dash of truculence and a rhythm crisp, well-maintained and broadly cast which still make very amusing reading.

His style, his diction, and even his versification are generally thoroughly classical. They have not too many of the later XVIII[th] century's unpleasant and objectionable characteristics. He gracefully continues the work of the happier preceding period, Denham and Waller the first two representatives of the classical school (3) being, with Prior and Pope, his favourites. But it would have been very strange if the romantic tendencies of the time had left no traces in the poetry of a man whose name has been associated (4) by some with that of the Wartons, of Collins, and of course of Gray — not without cause. Yet, neither his poetical criticism (5), nor his poetry (6)

1. Walpole (cf. about *Countess Temple's* etc... see above) pretended they came into his head naturally and easily enough, though perhaps not always as quickly as he should have liked. But he also admitted that « correctness » was most indispensable, and « correctness » generally means taking pains.

2. Such as we find it in *The Parish Register of Twickenham*, in *The Entail*, in *The Funeral of the Lioness*, and in some of his *Epilogues*. Epilogue to *The Mysterious Mother*, to *Tamerlane*, Epil. written for Mrs Clive. — 3. Cf. E. Legouis : Denham et Waller, *Revue des Cours et Conférences*, p. 798, 1re série, 20e année. — 4. Leslie Stephen : « Gray and his school ». *Hours in a Library*, London, 1890, vol. III, p. 101. — 5. Except when mentioning Percy's Ballads or Gray's poems. That in spite of his romantic tendencies Walpole very highly appreciated the English classical poets is evidenced by the fact that in his own French circle such poems as Prior's *Solomon* (Du Deff. *Lett. Toyn.*, Ed. I, p. 176) and Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard* (*ibid.*, 176-442) were relished and translated. — 6. With the

seem to be sufficiently aware of the impending changes which might be brought about by the romantic movement. Were it not for Gray's poetry and Shakespeare's dramas, and the place they occupy in Walpole's criticism, it would seem that, as an amateur critic, Walpole had totally ignored the romantic tendencies, and more especially the taste for Gothic, for which, more than any one else, he was responsible.

But as well as Walpole's love for theatrical matters and stage craft, *The Mysterious Mother* shows the pleasure he felt in practising the newly rediscovered art of imprinting terror (1) and expressing the soul-moving poetry of ruins, death, Gothic lore and superstition.

His enthusiastic appreciation of Shakespeare and the composition of such passages as those quoted from his tragedy, bear sufficient testimony to the romantic, nay the Gothic tendencies of his mind. They show that he was indeed, one of the first among his contemporaries who could find for such feelings adequate expression.

For his tragedy is much more than a spectacular play sprinkled with Gothic touches (2) ; though already forcibly expressed by words, allusions, and stage decoration, the Gothic shows its power here in a remoter but deeper and more psychological manner (3). It is the *genius loci*, that brings back Edmund to Narbonne's « mouldering walls and moss-grown towers », and, because he remembers the days of the glorious Gothic pageant, these walls have witnessed. Florian who represents a more modern and less sentimental way of looking at things rebukes him with the unpleasant and seamy side of the Dark

exception of the piece on Henry VI. — 1. Cf. *His letter to Jephson*, XI, 113. Jan. 27, 1780. — 2. Cf. Gosse. *XVII* th *Century Studies*, p. 66. — 3. Cf.

Ages (1). Even with regard to mere stage effect, Walpole's Thunder and Lightning are of an altogether more awful nature than those of Bayes.

Of course we miss in it the warm poetical glow of *The Cenci* and the emotional and often truly human beauty of that play. But in some ways the Countess with her sad and remorseful upbraidings reminds one of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (2), and still more of some personages of Cyril Tourneur or Ford (3), or of Marlowe, so suggestive of an intense and unfathomable despair : the despair of lost souls. Ford also, with his passionate yearnings of obstinate desire, and the tragic intensity of feeling of some of his characters, might afford some comparison. Rhetorical disquisitions, and controversies on religious or philosophical points, are naturally strongly reminiscent of Voltaire's practice. Walpole by these, not only gave vent to feelings which were his own, no doubt, but which he probably fancied would give weight to his tragedy and make it acceptable to the audience (4). But it is a fact that his name may be — with many qualifications it is true — added to those of the poetical and gloomy masters just mentioned.

Walpole, alluding to Gray said (5) that « encouragement had perhaps been wanting for his poems, and that, in a general manner, it was indispensable to the poet. » Walpole probably wanted no such incitement; he would have been far too proud to have accepted it. For a very short time he had entertained a youthful fancy that he was a poet, but soon his intelligent and appreciative mind un-

Walpoliana, I, 27. — 1. II, 1, p. 28. — 2. Cf. *ibid.* Marlow's Faustûs. — 3. *Tis' a pity she is a Whore* (by Ford). — 4. In this he seems to have been right. Cf. Baker. *Op. cit.* who greatly commends such passages. To Baker's high appreciation of *The Mysterious Mother*, may be added Croker's in the *Quarterly Review*. — 5. *Walpoliana*, I, 46.

derstood that, « neither thoughts nor harmonious numbers » are within the reach of a « soul gifted with some sparkle of poetic fire », if that fire is but weak and intermittent. In this, as in many other things, Walpole was content to test the powers of his mind. He did so, in a so called age « of reason, of prose and sense », (1) but in which, in fact, « an astonishing relative position was gained by poetical efforts » as it has been (2) cleverly pointed out. He realized he had not the gift of a Shakespeare or a Milton ; moreover for the labours and the troubles of a genuine poetical career he had no fancy ; poets like other artists are of necessity enthusiasts or martyrs, and Walpole always refused to be made of such stuff. To prose writings he turned the attention of a life-time, making many attempts with, according to his own exacting standards, as many comparative failures, except in one walk of literature : letter-writing. Among those failures of his chequered literary career, his poetical pursuits were quite typical of his attitude towards literary work, of his unsustained efforts, and of the bitter or weary disappointments in which they resulted.

Much cultivated as an intellectual and social art, and too much sometimes, as an amusement, in the circles in which he moved, poetry was for Walpole a means of winning popularity and recognition among gentlemen and ladies of refinement with whom the high breeding of the « old court » was much sought after.

His sprightliness, his wit, his spirit greatly helped him. It is quite easy to realise that within this circle Walpole could and did shine. He essayed what other poets like

1. Cf. G. Saintsbury, *The Peace of the Augustans*, p. 90. — 2. Lines which should have been made impromptu came too late to his mind. « Oh, were I such a poet as your friend » to Selwyn, about lord Car-

Prior, James Bramston, and Henri Carey (1) did successfully as writers of occasional verse, what in the XVIIth century France, Chapelle and Bachaumont, La Fontaine, Segrais and Chaulieu had so well achieved (2).

However, he knew better than that ; if his vanity was flattered, his intense pride (3) was ill-satisfied with the cheap applause and the empty compliments of what he knew to well to be the mutual admiration of societies or mere fashionable friends. He could not but laugh himself at « an assembly of rank fashion, *literati* and blue stockings, so blue to use his own words that it was Mazarin blue. (Cambridge History of Literature XI. 364). Here, more than elsewhere, he suffered from an itching for praise which could never satiate or satisfy him (4).

Poetry which he had read,studied and appreciated extensively, was an art which made him realize early and almost painfully what great parts, what industry also were required to make a man shine among poets and dramatists (5). Yet, we find in his poetry some interesting and not altogether despicable elements for the literary student: 1 st a genuine sense of friendship,mixed with the quintessence of gallantry, and polite breeding : things which he valued so much, though he was well aware real poetry was something different (6). Here, his treat-

lisle's verses on Gray. Carlisle was also a dramatic author. — 1. *Cambridge History of Literature*, vol. IX, p. 189-190. — 2. Cf Lanson. *Histoire de la Littérature française*, Paris, 1896, p. 558 and *sqq*.

3. I cannot think of the stage (for *M. M.*)I believe from Pride. May 11.1769. — 4. Of such trifles the greatest merit is to be correct. *Lett.*, XIV, p. 178. Aug. 4.1789. The *Beauties* are unfortunately so incorrect. Nov. 12.1746. — 5. About his wish to be a poet: cf. *Lett.*, VII, 279, VIII, 245 and his « regrets having been of the calling » (XIV,178 ; XIV, 67).« I am not a poet, and cannot improve your ideas: cf. also to G. Montagu as soon as Dec. 1761. when sending verses on Lady Mary Coke. « Nothing tempts me to aunch out again; every day teaches me how much I was mistaken in my own parts ».— 6. *Catalogue of R. and N. authors*, London, 1759, vol. II,

ment suggests a more or less distant kinship with Denham, Waller, Prior, Montagu and Addison. 2 ndly, his satire, his portraits in verse when powerful and at their best with regard to thought and expression, remind one of Dryden's and of Pope's (1) most signal performances in that way. 3 rdly a few touches of fashionable and Epicurean œstheticism (2), allied to a command of hard and sometimes picturesque language, with varied metrical skill, antithetical smartness and, here and there, a touch of « preciosité », quite befitting the poetry of a fine gentleman and a dilettante. 4 thly ; His *Mysterious Mother* is quite representative of a century in which were at work such various forces as those which transformed Tamerlane into a constitutional king, incensed party politics in Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa* (3), preserved the continued influence of Massinger and of Shakespeare in the drama, and fostered in poetry generally « Gothic feeling » of the *Eloisa to Abelard* type and of a more recent kind.

Poetry was for Walpole an amusing pastime, marred though it often was by uneasy bitterness. The record of his poetical works and the mixed feelings (4) they inspired are significant of the man himself. Disappointment, and sometimes mortification, which constitutional epicurism and acquired stoical philosophy helped him to overcome, resulted from Walpole's attempt at writing poetry.

Walpole's poetry derived a good deal, if not most of its charm, from its lightness and its superficiality ; but, it had a strength and a grace of its own, we might almost say

p. 43. — 1. H. Taine, *Hist. de la Littérature anglaise*, Paris, 1905, vol. IV, p. 194. — 2. Courthope, *op. cit.*, V, 361-363. This being noticeable in his criticism especially. — 3. Courthope, *op. cit.*, V, 437. — 4. How very much mixed and full of affected self contempt, these feelings were, may be gathered from a passage in a letter to the Countess of Upper Ossory. Walpole, who had in a previous message (Jan-15,

« the grace of old fashioned breeding » (5). It is also a curious and representative case in the literary history of « an age in which the practice of poetry had become the « exercise of every elegant imagination... When every man « of culture writes verse, the standard of poetical excellence « is soon confined to the writing of verse like a man of cul- « ture. Sentiment takes the place of passion ; grace is « esteemed more highly than thought ; and all poetry « which does not conform to the rules of artifice and ele- « gance is put out of court as inartistic and barbarous. (1) »

1775, to the Countess of Ailesbury) made fun of the childish amusement, « the puppet show Parnassus at Batheaston » remarks about « Mrs Miller's bouquet of artificial flowers ». « I have only had time, he says, to dip upon it, and see how very ridiculous compliments undeserved make one... I once did wish for fame, I own, now I dread it ; for, it is like diamonds, of little value, unless of the first water — and who would be fine in Bristol stones » ? — 5. Cf. *Letters*. June 15.1796. His last letter. — 1. Cf. A. Vaugh. Introduction to S. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. World's Classics, 1906, p. xiv. Preface.

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The men not bound by Pedant rules,
Nor ladies Précieuses Ridicules.

*

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N.-B. — The abbreviations in the foot notes refer to the following books :

Lett. : *Letters of Horace Walpole.* London, 1903.

L. Toyn. Sup. : *Supplement to the Letters* edited by, M. Paget Toynbee. London, 1918.

The Cor. The Correspondence of Gray, Walpole. West and Ashton. London, 1915.

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